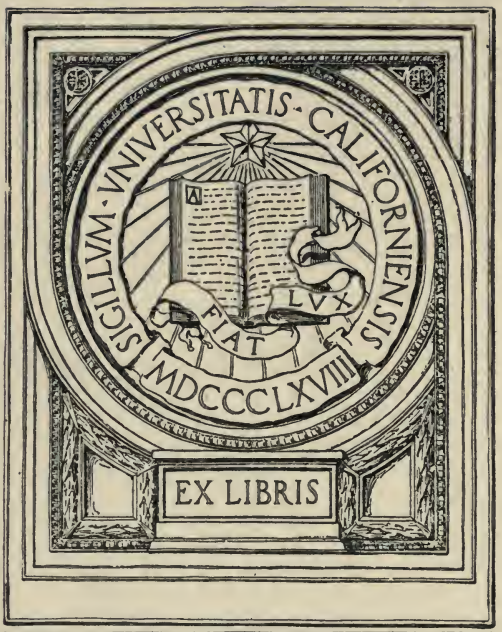
WITH · THE · EYES · OF · YOUTH ·

· WILLIAM · BLACK ·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WITH THE EYES OF YOUTH

AND OTHER SKETCHES

BY

WILLIAM BLACK

AUTHOR OF "A DAUGHTER OF HETH," ETC.

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PREFACE

With the view of making a complete edition of William Black's works, the following fugitive pieces, which appeared in magazines and elsewhere, have been collected and published.

These sketches offer exceptional knowledge of their writer, and are so grouped that they give in his own words, and in his own charming way, an outline of his life.

The first essay — "With the Eyes of Youth"—appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* of August, 1902. It was written early in 1898 for an American publication, and was the last thing that William

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Black ever wrote. It may be noted as a point of great pathos that this final piece of work was the record of first impressions of nature, the power of seeing and portraying which made him famous in later life.

The second sketch—"A Wild Day in '48"—appeared in *Harper's Round Table*, in 1897, and is a memory of the riots which occurred in Scotland as some faint echo of the Continental revolutions of that famous year. At that time William Black was seven years of age.

"The Highland Wedding" is referred to in the first essay, and is the story of an actual experience of childhood; it is retained here as a picture of fast-vanishing customs.

The fourth sketch is taken from *James Merle*, Black's first novel, written at the age of nineteen, and long since out of print and forgotten. But it was a wonderful

book for a lad to have written, and it seemed worth while to rescue from its pages the graphic representation of old Lowland life, and of the celebrated Dr. John Brown of Haddington. It also gives us a reflex glimpse of the writer's boyhood.

The next two excerpts, "Round and About Hampstead," and "The River of Dart," are taken from another early novel, which has not been procurable for many years. Here we have English scenery as it appealed to the young Scotsman when he first came South; the description of the Dart has long been dear to the few who possess copies of "The Monarch of Mincing Lane;" and it shows that even in those days the minute analysis and accurate descriptions of scenery was William Black's strong point.

But incident also appealed to the young

Scot, and in 1866 he went to Bohemia as special correspondent during the Seven Weeks' War. He sent home to the *Star* certain sidelights on war that are well worth considering, and which he put in a narrative form that is eminently readable. Four of these studies are given on pages 157-240.

Then the last sketch is the "Conversation with Carlyle"—telling of the time when William Black settled down as an author, and lived outwardly a quiet life of prosaic work, but inwardly dwelt in a land of lovely dreams. But the dream-world is real enough in its strain and trouble when it has to be portrayed for others. It was not the Puritanic restraints of childhood, it was not the hard fight of fame in youth, it was not the rash excursions of the journalist, that sapped William Black's health and powers; but it was the earnestness and thoroughness

which he threw into his writing; it was the effort of every year entering a new inner life, and living it with new characters, and living it at the rate of a lifetime a year. This was shown strongly in the touching epilogue to *Madcap Violet*.

On the other hand, William Black found great enjoyment in the world around him —the earliest flowers, the coming of the swallows, the light on the sea, all gave him so much happiness that he often enjoyed in one day that which others never see nor enjoy in a lifetime.

William Black died December 10, 1898, aged 57.

H. M.

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WITH THE EYES OF YOUTH

WITH THE EYES OF YOUTH

PART I

The writer of these lines has seen a few things here and there—the rose-white dawn awakening over Venice, the blue-black waves of the Euxine thundering along to the neck of the Bosphorus, the red sunsets of Egypt, the glamour of the moonlight irradiating the domes and minarets of Stamboul,—but never, never, never has he seen anything so beautiful and wonderful as a neglected little bit of coppice lying just outside an insignificant Scotch village. For he was town born and town bred; and when, as a small boy, he was suddenly projected into the country,

and left to roam about pretty much at his own will, the world seemed crowded with mysteries, and surprises, and bewilderments.

For example, in a town a rabbit is a commonplace object, hung up in front of a poulterer's shop: it is an entirely different thing when a brown living creature —looking for one thrilling moment about as big as thirty thousand elephants—springs suddenly from beneath your feet and bolts for its burrow: then the heart jumps and the whole frame trembles.

But the great feature of this wood, in the spring-time, was the extraordinary translucent shimmering greenness of the foliage —the beeches being our especial favourites, because we could climb up the smooth stems, and go out and still further out on one of the branches until the slightest motion produced an up-and-down swaying very much like what is experienced in the

bow of a sailing-boat facing a heavy sea—which some people enjoy, and which some other people do not seem quite so much to enjoy. And of course we ate the young beech-leaves, and declared to each other that they were good; just as we professed to like the young tips of the hawthorn hedges—and that is about the bitterest food ever chewed by boy or donkey.

However, to come back to the wilderness of greenwood and sunlight, it was here I first discovered a bird's-nest—to my own intense amazement: in fact, I was so alarmed by the sudden scurrying away of the mother-bird that I stood stock still, thus enabling an older lad (who knew the laws of the game) to rush forward and touch the nest with his finger, and call out, "First pick!" —which means that the discoverer claims his first choice of the younglings. This was not quite playing fair, for I had found the nest, and directed his attention to it;

but it was nothing like what followed a few days afterwards. For I had been invited to the wedding of a farmer who lived two or three miles further south; and, as the festivities were of an all-night character, they had small attraction for me, so I went to bed early, and got up early, roaming about as usual. What was my delight to find that the ploughman, who was the great vocalist of this countryside, had never gone to bed at all, but was now at his work, while he regaled himself with snatches of song, sung in a high and clear tenor voice. And now it was the charms of Annie Laurie that he chanted, and again it was the sorrows and sad fate of Prince Charlie, and yet again it was the sylvan beauties of Craigieburn Wood; but generally (if memory serves) he came back to an Irish song which, perhaps, is still known as "The Rose of Tralee." The theme is familiar. The young man, while

taking good care to particularize the outward and physical attractions of the young lady whom he celebrates, hastens to assert that it was not these that drew him towards her.

> "Oh no, 'twas the truth in her eye ever beaming,
> That made me love Mary, the Rose of Tralee." *

And, following the clear tones of this tenor voice, I might have been entranced away into the wild-wood, like the Monk Felix of "The Golden Legend," only that the ploughshare had to be turned at the end of the field; and just at the same moment there was a terrific tumult, as of the bursting of a bomb-shell, immediately behind my head. I wheeled round. I saw, not only the departing blackbird, but also her nest in the hedge; and when, with some apprehensive nervousness, I went to explore, behold, there were four young "blackies" gazing at me from out

* The accuracy of this quotation is not guaranteed.

of the almost hidden sanctuary among the leaves. It was the last I ever saw of them. Like a fool, I went and communicated my great secret to a farm-youth, and I even had the indiscretion to bring him along to the precise spot and show him the nest. Something must have told me that this was an unwise proceeding; because subsequently, during the day, I sought him out and explained to him that, for myself, I did not want the young blackbirds, but that I was anxious they should be left alone. I also gave him a penny on his solemn promise not to reveal the whereabouts of the nest.

He was a scoundrel of the deepest dye. When I went along in the afternoon—cautiously and at a distance—to see if the young brood were secure under the ministrations of their mother, I found that all of them had been taken, and the nest ruthlessly destroyed. From that moment my

faith in human nature departed; and I have never spoken to a farm-lad since.

All the same, it was about this time I became possessed of a bird of my own—a strange-looking fowl, that not one of the youths of the village could identify as belonging to any known species. He was a big, gaunt, half-fledged creature, with staring eyes and a portentous yellow bill, and his sole notion in life seemed to be to keep that yellow bill open until it was stuffed full of "drummock"—which is a decoction of oatmeal and water. He was a most disappointing playmate. He never even tried to sing. There was no responsive recognition in the goggle eyes; there was nothing but the eternally gaping beak, asking to be fed from morning till night. His destiny overtook him. Drummock was his ruin—or, rather, over-eating. He must have died of gout. In the end the unclassified beast passed away; and

there were not many tears shed over his loss, for we could only associate him with unlimited drummock.

Far different was it with the bright, alert little sparrow my sister taught to eat out of her hand and follow her about: he was an object of general interest and admiration. More than once a stranger has stopped to watch the spry little Jackie trotting after his mistress as she went along the road, has courteously raised his hat and inquired whether so intelligent a small creature was to be bought. But Jackie was not to be bought. Jackie was not a purchasable commodity. Besides, how was Jackie's affection to be transferred? No money could buy that result of long training and natural disposition; as soon as he found himself not in his own accustomed home, among familiar people, he would have taken to himself wings and fled out into the wilds. Alas! to Jackie also the end

came. He was accidentally trodden upon, in the dark; and, notwithstanding that the most loving care was lavished on him, he never rallied; poor Jackie's life was gone for ever. Next day the boys in the village school were startled by an apparition: it was my sister, who boldly marched up to the schoolmaster's desk (the fact that the schoolmaster was also our landlord may have had something to do with this unheard-of temerity) and asked that I should be allowed to go out with her for half an hour. Permission was granted, though I thought the heavens would fall upon us for this infringement of all rules and regulations. And there, in the garden, close by the hedge, I was shown the carefully made grave of our poor little Jack; and at the head of the small space an upright slate had been inserted in the soil; and on the slate had been inscribed a few words recording his many qualities and virtues.

We ne'er shall look upon his like again.

By the way, this garden was another wonderland of marvels; for I had been allotted a restricted portion of it all to myself, along with a due supply of slips, and cuttings, and seeds; and when the soft air and sunlight of the spring began to awaken these into life, each day brought forth new miracles. The most amazing of all was the gradual opening of the great crimson buds of the pæonies — which we called "piano-roses," just as we corrupted "none-so-pretty" into "Nancy pretty." Indeed, some of these country phrases are to be admired. Southernwood, with its delicious scent, was universally known as "apple-ringy;" and scarlet-runners is surely more poetical than "French beans," which is suggestive of cookery. Each of us had also a bit of a kitchen-garden, the produce of which—carrots, turnips, and the like—was

invariably pulled up, and surreptitiously washed, and eaten raw, long before it had reached maturity. The strangest part of this performance has still to be stated—we are alive.

Another beneficent feature of the gardens was that it permitted one to escape unseen into the forest-land. You had only to go away down to the foot of it, then get under and through a hawthorn hedge, then hop from one to the other of the stepping-stones in the burn, then cross a wide meadow, then scramble over a wall, and you found yourself in a hushed and silent plantation of young larches. And perhaps, by appointment, a companion might be found lurking under this wall; and supposing he had brought with him that formidable-looking "horse pistol"—that is to say, a cavalry pistol of the flint-striking times—why then the mysterious and enchanting process of loading might begin in this safe shelter:

first the charge of gunpowder, well shaken down to the bottom of the barrel, next a wad, next a charge of shot, and again a wad, finally a careful priming warranted to keep dry. Then would these two poachers, slowly and breathlessly, sneak away through the awe-inspiring stillness of the bushes, whispering to each other, and pretending every second moment that they could descry something—a pheasant, a hare, perhaps even a roe-deer. And every now and again the pistol would be discharged at some imaginary object in the underwood; and a legend would have to be concocted on the spot about the kind of creature that had escaped destruction by just one-fifteenth of an inch. As a matter of fact, we never killed anything—not even ourselves; we never saw a hare or a pheasant—nor yet a gamekeeper, who ought to have been attracted by our repeated explosions: but these furtive stalkings through the

greenwood had an inexpressible fascination. There were other and wilder delights in this countryside of magic, but they must be dealt with later on.

PART II

It was an ever-memorable day when there arrived an enormous kite (a kite was usually called a "draigon" in those parts), which had been sent out to me by a good friend who had taken the trouble to make it himself; and the great size of the draigon, its weight, the length, and variegated colours of its tail, and the huge ball of twine that accompanied the whole, produced a profound impression on the district, or, at least, on the younger inhabitants thereof.

But such is the irony of life: when, afternoon after afternoon, one had summoned one's comrades, and had the unwieldy draigon carried out to an adjacent meadow, we discovered that it entirely

failed to fulfil the purpose of its existence. We would set it up on end, and affix the cord, and try to raise it against the wind, but it simply fell flat on its face, like a woman in a faint. Until there came the never-to-be-forgotten morning. There was a fresh northerly breeze, and we were having one more try. Then, all of a sudden, the hitherto inert draigon seemed to acquire life; when we heaved it up from the ground it gradually rose and receded from us; as we quickly paid out the line it was still rising and rising, until one began to fear it might smash itself among the chimney-pots of the cottages. Nothing of the kind! It soared steadily higher and higher, sailing far above the cottages, and beyond the gardens, and beyond the unseen fields, until it was a mere brown speck in the sky, while the delicious strain on the line was just about all we could manage. Indeed, to try what that strain was, I tied the end

of the cord round the waist of a very small boy, and asked him if he could hold his ground. He could not. He was slowly being hauled onward—a miniature Ganymede—when we had to rush to his rescue, and unloosen him from his bonds. Ah me! it was during this disentangling business that some mishap must have occurred. When we turned we found that the remote brown speck was slowly descending from the silver-white skies. We pulled and pulled, to awaken the draigon to a sense of its duty, but the beast failed to respond; on the contrary, it gradually, and steadily, and remorselessly sank to earth; and still we pulled and pulled, in some wild forlorn hope of getting it to rise again. And then the horror of the situation broke upon us. The draigon was doubtless lying in some distant field, and we had been hauling it, face downward, over stones and brambles and other obstacles. So, with shaking

hearts, we ran off, and passed by the cottages, and pursued our way down the gardens, and jumped or splashed across the burn, and got out on to the meadow, in search of the thread of a line that would show us where our wounded kite was lying. Well, when at last we made the discovery, there never was such a tragic sight. The great brown draigon was all despoiled—lying in rags and tatters,—while the long tail had been almost entirely robbed of its fancy colours. There was silence for a time, in contemplation of this melancholy spectacle. And then each one began eagerly to assure the other that it could easily be mended up. Why not—with paste and sheets of paper? The cane-work had not been much damaged. Oh yes, we assured ourselves (or pretended to assure ourselves), we should soon have the mighty draigon again mounting into the skies. And yet it was rather a silent procession

that carried the bedraggled kite towards the village. We had inward qualms. To each other we were confident, but each one in his own mind was not so confident. Of course, when we got home we set about repairing damages with such small skill as we had; and eventually the big draigon was tinkered up in a fashion, and, after a few days' drying, was once more taken out into the meadow. Anxiously we waited for the first performance. There was no performance. The creature lay flat on its face, and each time we hoisted it into the air, to give it a chance of the favouring breeze, it simply fell down again, and lay prone on the grass. Antæus would not rebound. He had shown us what he could do, in one remarkable and historical flight, and now he would not move. We tried all the tricks we knew—getting up on walls or trees to fling him into the air, and give him a good send-off; but

nothing was of any avail: down he would come flat on his face, and refuse to stir. What finally became of the great brown draigon I cannot remember. It seemed to pass out of our existence. Probably we gave it to the smaller boys—to torture them with vain hopes and useless experiments.

But the concentration of interest and mystery in this magical neighbourhood was a small, gloomy, sombre tarn, set deep in the woods, and known by the name of the Water Hole. It was so deep set in the woods that never a breath of wind stirred its black surface; and the belief prevalent in the district was that this secluded small lake was bottomless, and therefore a place to be shunned. In fact, when any one of us made an expedition to this haunted mere, it was by roundabout ways, as if one were afraid of being seen; and if one spoke to one's companion, it was in a low

tone, so conscious were we of the brooding silence of the unfrequented place. But what hobgoblin stories of the bottomless pit could deter boys from invading its sanctuary when it was known that perch inhabited the sullen waters? Nay, one could see them — the striped bodies of them could be seen—moving through the clear deeps, and taking very little heed of anything happening on the banks. Now, "bobbing" for perch is not an exciting form of angling — not, for example, as bobbing for salmon; and if any one doubts whether such a thing is possible, I will give him a more recent experience of my own. We were upon a remote Highland river at the time, and fishing had practically to be abandoned because of the steel-like clearness of the weather. One day our old gillie asked me, simply for amusement, to crawl out on to the edge of a certain rock, and look into the pool below. It was the

strangest sight. Down there in the still cauldron the salmon were slowly circling round and round, like gold-fish in a globe, and the huge creatures appeared to know nothing and care nothing about what was going on in the world above them. From simple curiosity I motioned the gillie to bring me my rod; and then, with a short line, I gently dropped the fly into the pool. The fish saw it, certainly, for they came round in their monotonous circling; one after another would for a second rise a few inches and examine the lure, and then quietly drop down again and continue on his not very exciting career. Nevertheless there was some broken water at the side of the pool; and all of a sudden a splendid fellow came rushing out and seized the fly. In an instant I was on my feet, paying line to him as he dashed up and down the circumscribed water. "What are you doing there?" my companion had called to me

from the bank. "Are you bobbing for perch?" I hadn't been bobbing for anything, the weather being so sunny and clear; I merely dropped the fly into the glassy pool to see what the fish would say to it: yet here I had him fast and firm; and as he did not show any disposition to go down the falls, there was little trouble with him; eventually he was landed on the rock. I will not state his weight. There are some things that grow with years—like bushes, and trees, and the national debt, and so forth—and why not the weight of fish? Of course I was jeered at for having "bobbed" for salmon; but I wish to observe that that twenty-pounder—oh, well, to propitiate the suspicious, one may as well take off a little, and call it a twelve-pounder—was legitimately hooked and landed with the fly.

However, to return to the Water Hole and the perch. In those days we had no

seventeen-foot split-cane rods with elaborate tackle to match; we had to select a stiff willow wand, and trim it carefully, and attach a line (I fear the line was usually and surreptitiously purloined from the cord belonging to the now discredited and discarded draigon), at the foot of the line being a hook, artfully disguised in a bit of hardly-kneaded paste. Then, when everything was ready, we sallied forth; we opened the wooden gate leading into the meadows; we passed the disused coal-pit (now, is it possible for any human being to pass a disused coal-pit without heaving a stone into it, to listen to the long trundle-trundle, ending in a splash, that told of unknown waters?); and then we slunk down again into the valley, carrying our fishing-rods very low. Why there should have been this concealment, or pretended concealment, it is hard to say. The Water Hole was never fished, for there was nothing

in it but those perch, not attractive to an angler; the surrounding woods were never visited by any sportsmen, so that we could hardly be accused of trespassing; and we had no dog with us, so that we could not disturb the game, if any. Perhaps the secret was that the elder folk of the village had impressed on the younger folk the extreme danger of going near the Water Hole. The sides were so steep that a single false step meant a plunge into the bottomless pit. No rescue was possible. No cries could be heard. You would simply splash about in the horrible tarn, until death swallowed you up. Now, these were sound and sensible reasons for our not going; they were also the reasons that compelled us to go.

All the same, the wisdom of the ancientry was nearly being justified on one striking occasion. My companion on this expedition was a youth named Andrew (he was named

Andrew, but he was really called Anra), and when we had passed by the echoing old coal-pit, and down by the meadows, and were well out of sight of the village, we shouldered our rods with much pomp and bravado. Catching fish is not everything; it is the noble endeavour that enchants. And so we got through the woods and reached the precipitous slopes of the Water Hole. Certainly the perch were there; we could see their striped backs moving hither and thither: nor did they appear to take much notice of us, except that they gradually moved a little way further out. Our protracted efforts to inveigle them, either with paste or with worm, were in vain; and so one of these anglers, not having the true sportsman's instinct within him, laid aside his rod, and began to clamber up the bank in search of nests. In that direction he was rewarded, for he found one quite close by, with three gaping

young ones in it. He was patiently endeavouring to induce them to eat a little bit of paste, as a whet for the dinner their mother would be bringing them in the course of the day, when——

When there was an appalling crash behind; and, turning round, one's startled gaze beheld Anra in the Water Hole, face upward, and kicking out his legs with might and main to keep himself afloat. He had attempted to reach the slowly retreating perch by clambering out on an elder branch; he had missed his footing; and had gone headlong into the water. What was to be done? The worst of it was that he seemed unconsciously to be making for the middle of this solitary mere instead of returning to the bank. I yelled to him to come back—it was all I could do, for he could swim and I could not; and, seeing that these frantic counsels were of no avail, I fled away to the village with

the desperate cry, "Andrew's in the Water Hole!" Then there was a turmoil, the men searching for ropes, the women for cordials; and presently a small crowd was running swiftly across the meadows, with some wild hope that the drowning lad might still be saved. Well, when they got to the Water Hole, there was Anra standing on the grass in front of them, a pitiable spectacle, bonnetless, and dripping from head to foot. He was too paralyzed and frightened to run away; but the moment he had come ashore he had made haste to hide his fishing-rod. And now he was being severely questioned. What had he been about? How dared he go near so dangerous a place? The men were angry (through having been called away from their work), and talked about giving him a taste of the rope's end; the women were more sympathetic, and said, "Poor lad, poor lad! come away home now,

and get some dry things put on you." And so the bewildered and shivering Anra was escorted back by the *posse comitatus*. As for the present writer, as soon as these people were well out of sight, he went quickly and sought out both rods, and put them into a better place of concealment. For, of course, we were coming back to the Water Hole. It was inevitable. The brindled perch were there. One could see them swimming this way and that, under the hazel and willow bushes.

I suppose that by now the old-fashioned village has been quite swept away. Probably the Water Hole has been drained, and the sides of it turned into terraced gardens; no doubt the plantations surrounding it are dotted with the villas of rich merchants; and the field in which the ploughman sung, in the early morning, the praises of Annie Laurie, and the Rose of Tralee, and Bonnie Mary of Argyll,

is most likely transformed into a tennis-ground, with fashionable young ladies having tea under a verandah. But to one person at least it is the former condition of things that remains vivid—vivid to the trembling of every leaf and the flight of every bird; and of the various objects that memory summons up most vivid of all are the beech trees swaying in the sunlight in their splendour of shining yellow-green.

A WILD DAY IN '48

A WILD DAY IN '48

THERE was a vague apprehension in the air; every one appeared conscious that something was about to happen, though no one seemed to know precisely what; and so, as childhood is naturally curious, the writer of these lines, being then of the age of seven, managed to escape from the house unobserved, out into the great murmuring town. Half-frightened glances turned towards the east were a kind of guidance; and in that direction he accordingly wandered, until he came in sight of a crowd—not a beautiful, richly coloured, processional crowd such as might have gone through the streets of Florence in

mediæval times, with boy choristers chanting, and maidens carrying palms, but a black and grimy and amorphous assemblage of men, silent, in deadly earnest, who at the moment were engaged in tearing down the tall iron railing surrounding Glasgow Green, in order to secure weapons for themselves. And this small person of seven thought that he too must be up and doing. The others were wresting these enormous bars from their soldered sockets: why should not he also be furnished with an implement of destruction? And so he tugged and pulled and struggled; and yet the iron bar, about thrice as high as himself, remained obdurate; and again and again he pulled, and dragged, and vainly shook; in the midst of which determined endeavours a hand was swiftly laid on his arm, and a young Highland lass (her eyes jumping out of her head with terror), who had been wildly running and searching all

over the neighbourhood, dragged away the young rebel from the now marshalling crowd. Perhaps the alarm in her face impressed him; at all events he meekly yielded. That was not the usual expression of her face—when she was telling marvellous tales of children being carried away by eagles and brought up in a nest on a crag; the heroine of these various adventures, I remember, was called Angel; and whatever else happened to her, in the end her constancy, and virtue, and beauty were invariably rewarded by a happy marriage.

But now the surging mass of rioters came along, each man of them with one of those long spikes over his shoulder; and the trembling Highland lass, still clinging tightly to her charge, shrank hiding into an archway, and tried to conceal the child with her substantial skirts, till the man-eating ogres should go by. "Willst du nicht aufstehn, Wilhelm, zu schauen die

Prozession?" some one might have asked —but not this Highland girl, who was doubtless thinking (in Gaelic) that the people who dwelt in cities were capable of dreadful things. Well, when one did peep out, there was not much to see—at least, nothing picturesque to attract the wondering eyes of childhood: there were no flags, no Mænads with flowing hair; nor was there any gesticulation, nor any attempt at oratory; only this great dark multitude moving on into the city, with two or three leaders marching in front, these ominously glancing from right to left, as if to judge where the sacking should begin. For they had come to sack a city, had these men. There was a talk at the time of bread riots; and no doubt there was a great deal of distress prevailing, as there generally is; and presumably there was a considerable proportion of these demonstrators honestly protesting against a social system that did

not provide them with work. But it was not loaves the instigators of this movement were after, as events showed; rather it was silver teapots, and diamond brooches, and silk umbrellas—in short, a general partitioning of property; and of course there were plenty of vagabonds and ne'er-do-weels only too ready to fall in with that entrancing idea.

By what secret and devious ways the Highland lass managed to get herself and her captive back to our home in the Trongate—the historic Trongate of the ancient city of Glasgow—I cannot now say; but she must have been clever and smart about it; for when one at length reached the eagerly thronged windows, it was found that the fun in the thoroughfare below was only beginning. The whole thing looked strange. Musgrave the gunsmith (his sign was two gold guns crossed) was the first to put up his shutters. Perhaps the police

had warned him that the rioters would make straight for his premises, to seize arms and ammunition, though, to be sure, there was not a policeman anywhere visible. No; what was visible was a great, swarming, tumultuous assemblage of men and lads who, at a signal from their leaders, had become stationary in front of a silversmith's shop. The silversmith, like the rest of his neighbours, had hurriedly shut and locked up his shop on hearing of the approach of the mob; but that did not avail him much. Another signal was given. Volunteers rushed forward, and proceeded with their long iron pikes to batter in the panels of the door. Then a hole was made. Then one man stooped and crawled in and opened the door from the inside. The curious thing was that the crowd did not rush into the shop. Perhaps some instinct told them that they would instantly block up the place, and would

thus escheat themselves of the spoils of victory. There was a cheer, doubtless, when the panel was hammered in—a long, hoarse, raucous cheer; but the mass held back; only the leaders entered; and for a few minutes there was a dumb expectancy.

What now followed was one of the most singular scenes that any small boy of seven ever set eyes upon. From the wide-opened door flashing white things came flying out; high above the heads of the crowd they came; but as they descended a forest of straining arms and hands received them; and there was cheer after cheer as the plunder went on. It did not matter what it was: silver fish-knives, coffee-pots, biscuit-boxes, cruet-stands, opera-glasses—out they came flying to fall into this or that one's clutch; and again and again the hoarse roar of exultation went up, even from those who could not get near enough

to share. These people with the upstretched arms appeared to have no fear whatever of getting their heads cut open by an electro-plated salver, a drawing-room lamp, or a brass candlestick. On the missiles came; and the covetous fingers grabbed here and there; and the fierce tumult of applause ebbed and flowed. Where were the police? Well, there did not seem to be any police. It is true, a number of special constables had been hastily sworn in (my eldest brother was one of them, and according to his own account performed prodigies of valour); but they could not be everywhere; and meanwhile the poor silversmith's goods were being catapulted out to those clamorous upstretched hands.

Of a sudden a new feature appeared in this changing panorama. Ten or a dozen men (I think they wore some sash or badge of office, but I am not positive on this

point) who seemed to have dropped from the clouds were jamming their way through the dense multitude; and when at length they had reached the pavement in front of the silversmith's shop, they began to lay about them lustily with their staves, each blow falling vertically on several heads at once. In Egypt I have seen an old Arab sheik do precisely the same thing, when his young men had become unruly. And in neither case was there the slightest resistance to constituted authority. This great mass of people could have turned upon the handful of special constables and rent them in pieces; but they did not; they tried in a kind of way to move on, though by this time all the central thoroughfares of the city were blocked, and a man who has a cruet-stand or a silver dish-cover concealed under his coat cannot glide easily between his neighbours. Whether the constables succeeded in

arresting any of the ringleaders at this particular spot, I cannot recollect; but all the afternoon came wilder and wilder stories of chases, and captures, and seizures of booty. My brother was personally conducting a party of five of the rioters to the police-station, through a very bad neighbourhood, when they turned on him, tripped him, and threw him down. But he was up again in a moment, with the cursory declaration that if any one of them advanced a step towards him, or attempted to escape either, he would forthwith split his, the thief's, skull in two. And what is more, he would have done it; for he was a powerful man; and he had a drawn truncheon; and he was never at any time a slave to punctilio. I forget the number of gold and silver watches found in the possession of these rascals.

But now the great event of the day, to the imagination of childhood, at all events,

was approaching; for the bruit was gone abroad that the cavalry had been ordered in from their suburban barracks to ride through the streets and disperse the mob, and put an end to any lingering lawlessness. Plundering in the main thoroughfares had by this time mostly ceased; for the chief ringleaders had been arrested and haled off to the police-stations; while the worst of their followers roamed about in a surreptitious way, seeking what they could devour, rather than daring openly to attack the shuttered shops. The central parts of the city still remained congested, notwithstanding the reading of the Riot Act; for many simple country folk had wandered in, perhaps out of curiosity, perhaps anxious about their relatives; and of course they could not well get about, because of the crush. Altogether they formed a restless, half-frightened, elbowing, and struggling crowd; but it was a

sombre crowd—especially as the dusk of the afternoon drew on to twilight; so that the delight of one small spectator may be imagined when there appeared in the distance a fringe of colour—a splendour of uniforms—the glint of helmet and drawn sabre—the prancing of horses. And now began a wild hurry-and-scurry, the people surging against themselves in their frantic efforts to get free, a chaos and confusion impossible to describe. On came the dragoons, pressing against this nebulous mass of humanity, sparing the women as well as they could, but riding down the men—especially where any disposition was shown to form defiant groups—and striking right and left with the back of their swords. It was all very picturesque and splendid—to one youthful onlooker—here in the gathering gloom: the flash of brass and steel, the clink-clank of bridle and scabbard, the fleeing of fugitives, the

pawing and rearing of reined-in chargers where a group of terrified women found themselves incapable of retreat. Why, it was better than the fight with Apollyon in the "Pilgrim's Progress;" for that was only a picture, in flaming red and yellow colours; whereas this was full of movement and change, and a certain dim fascination of fear. And so the dark came down, and the gases in the house were lit; but out there the dragoons were still riding hither and thither through the night, pursuing and dispersing, with a rattle of horses' hoofs on the stony street.

What happened next was remarkable enough. The fact is, you cannot at a moment's notice drive a welded crowd out of a long and narrow thoroughfare. It is not to be done; and in this case it was not done; for the people, seeing their neighbours here and there knocked over by the horses or slapped on the shoulder

by those gleaming blades, forthwith fled pell-mell into the adjacent "closes," lanes, archways, and common stair-cases, which were very speedily choked up. To all outward seeming, the pavements and the causeway, now dimly visible under the yellow light of the street lamps, had been swept clear; but, none the less, the Trongate held all these innumerable huddled and hiding groups of frightened folk, as we were soon to know. For, through some accident or another, the outer door of our house chanced to be opened for a second, and instantly there burst into the lobby and into the rooms a whole number of women, panting, shaking, haggard-eyed, and speechless.

They made no apology for taking possession of a stranger's dwelling, the simple reason being that in their agony of alarm they were incapable of uttering a word; they did not know what they were doing

or where they were; they were entirely bereft of their senses. A friend of mine who was through a long war (I do not mention his nationality, for fear of wounding patriotic sensitiveness) told me that, on one occasion, after an unexpected reverse, the regiment in which he served was seized by a perfectly ungovernable panic; there was no withstanding the infection of this madness; the whole lot of them, himself included, took to their heels, and ran, and ran, and ran, hour after hour, until they flung themselves exhausted on the floor of any shanty that chanced to be on their way; and then there was never more than ten minutes' sleep to be snatched, for one or other of them was sure to spring up with the cry, "They'e coming!" and off they would set again, in hysterical and insensate flight. It would seem as if a regiment had a nervous system just as a human being has, and

that either may find it fail at a critical moment, until reason reasserts itself. I remember regarding with the greatest curiosity these unaccountable visitors who had invaded our home. Decent-looking, respectably dressed women they were, who obviously had no more to do with the riot than the man in the moon; most likely they had never heard of such a thing as a Riot Act; but here they were imprisoned, their voice and wits alike gone from them, and no means possible to them of communicating with their friends. Not any one of them appeared to know any other of them. Some stood in the middle of the dining-room, seemingly unable to move another step, pale, trembling, distraught; one or two had sunk helplessly into chairs; one or two were looking out from the windows at the terrors from which they had just escaped, their scared eyes following the clanking up and down of the

dragoons, the charging of the horses, the escape of this or that guilty-conscienced runaway along the dark and gas-lit street. And what was to be done with these paralyzed and speechless guests, when once they had partially come to themselves? Among the elder members of the family I gathered there was some talk of our being able to pass them through the lines of the soldiery when our special constable should return; but no one knew at what hour his multifarious duties might be over. Well, that is all I can relate of this peculiar situation of affairs, for now I was taken off to bed; and at what hour, and under what escort these tremulous fugitives were conveyed past the lines of military occupancy I cannot determine. Altogether it was a wild and memorable day, and many and wild and wonderful were the tales thereafter told of it; so that, for the time being, in the case of one

small listener, his old friends the Giants Pope and Pagan, Robinson Crusoe and Friday, and even the eagle-captured children of the far West Highlands were quite put into the shade.

A HIGHLAND WEDDING

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The farm of Carn-sliosach is placed in the centre of the bleakest portion of the bleak island of Iolay. Along its shores Iolay possesses considerable tracts of cultivated and productive land, but here there is little else than morass, broken by rocky eminences occasionally rising into hills. So comparatively useless are these tracts of low-lying and undrained moor, that in some places the farmer is allowed a free lease for five years of whatever he takes the trouble to reclaim.

Carn-sliosach is bounded on the north, south, east, and west by moors, and was originally part of a moor itself. A more

miserable, dirty, yet picturesque, old farm-house it is impossible to conceive; built of roughly hewn stones, with the least possible quantity of lime between, and thatched so loosely with straw that along the roof are several straw ropes to keep the house-covering from being blown off; these ropes, having at their extremity a large stone by way of fastening, which pendulous and dangerous ornaments go all round the building. Inside, the chief apartment is, of course, the kitchen, divided into two portions, one end serving the purpose of a cow-house, the other containing a bed and old wooden table, several rickety stools, and in centre of the open space the fire-place. Chimney there is none; a hole in the roof allows the peat smoke to escape—when the peat smoke is so inclined.

But there is a room at Carn-sliosach—a museum! Into this small apartment are crammed the luxuries of the farm—the

peacock's feather brushes, the East Indian shells, the engravings representing David with the head of Goliath in his hand, and Jonah being pitched into the sea; the old eight-day clock, which has long ago rusted itself into disuse in this inclement region; with all the various natural and artificial curiosities which please the fancy or gratify the wonder of these simple Highlanders. In this cabinet of treasures slept Duncan Stewart's only daughter until the day of her departure for the cold and distant Carraig-dubh, which ceremony forms the subject of the present paper.

Helen Stewart was lithe and graceful in appearance, with a bright, intelligent face, dark blue eyes, and raven-black hair. She was to be married to the son of a small farmer in the north-western portion of the island; and the first definite intimation of the approaching ceremony which we received was the arrival of two large jars of

whisky, sent hither by the bridegroom's father; for, as it turned out, no marriage can be properly solemnized without being preceded by the "bottling-night," — an evening set apart for the purpose of bringing together all the friends of the bride and bridegroom to test their respective capacities for whisky-drinking.

Towards the afternoon Duncan Stewart himself, with his three sons, Donald, John, and Colin, came in from their farm work, and proceeded to prepare the kitchen. The cows were accommodated in a neighbouring barn, the place cleaned out, all the stools, chairs, and forms that could be laid hold of were forthwith arranged in tiers, and a large number of glasses had been got on loan from the village of Bonore. At nightfall the men arrived, one by one on foot, many of them sorely tired with a long journey after their day's labour had been finished. Gradually the seats began to be

occupied, and the hum of discordant Gaelic waxed louder and stronger as friend met friend, or enemy met enemy. Then began the business of the evening. Duncan Stewart brought out one of his own bottles and sent it round the company, each man filling his glass as far as the bottle went. Then Duncan, a tall, spare man, with keen, weather-beaten face, and dark piercing eyes, rose to his feet, and in a speech of nervous and disjointed Gaelic, proposed the health of the bridegroom and all the bridegroom's friends. The toast was responded to by the bridegroom's father, who also made the most complimentary allusions to his son's future wife, after which they all sat down to the serious duty of drinking each other's health, which is done in this wise. Pouring out a glass of whisky, you take it in your left hand, and make your way round the tables to every man you know or recognize. You shake him by the

hand, wish him *deoch-slainte*, and toss off the liquor. Then you fill your glass and wait being so called upon in return; for no man will drink his glass until he has shaken hands with you and seen you do likewise.

Women are not supposed to honour the convivialities of this evening with their presence, but there was a loud and universal call for the beauty of Carn-sliosach, and in a few minutes there came out from the room Helen Stewart, blushing and smiling as unaffectedly as a Highland maiden always blushes and smiles. She passed along the tables and shook hands with all her friends and acquaintances. One man sprang up, and attempted to kiss her; in an instant his neighbour on the other side of the narrow table felled him to the ground. A serious altercation was likely to ensue, but the respective friends of each combatant summarily seized their man by

the neck, and bound him over to keep the peace in much guttural and vehement Gaelic. Helen returned to her room; the drinking went on without interruption till dawn began to steal into the apartment, about four o'clock. Then the men, appearing to shake off the effects of the night's debauch in an almost miraculous manner, severally walked out and departed for their own farms, there to begin their day's work.

Three days after, and a beautiful August morning breaks over Carn-sliosach. Duncan Stewart's three stalwart sons are early up and out over the farm, setting all things to rights preparatory to the great event of the day. The old man is now at the door of the house, with his two shepherd collies at his heels. "As mo-shealladh!" he cries, and in an instant the dogs have darted from him, have crossed a small stream, sprung up the bank, and are away over a clover field. Duncan's keen eye follows

them as they grow less and less in the distance. "Air falbh thu!" rings his voice again, and, though the dogs are nigh out of sight, they change their course and sweep round the base of the hill. The sheep have ceased to crop the scanty herbage, and now stand with heads all turned one way, watching the approach of the wiry-limbed animals. Now the dogs are on the farther side, you hear the faint sound of the warning bark, and see the moving mass of grey wool slowly leaving the hillside. "Shocair! air do schocair! Good, dogs, good!" for there come the whole troop of sheep trotting across the clover field, through the stream, and into this field of grass. The dogs watch, with ears erect, for the slightest sign or sound from their master. He raises his hand, and they at once come submissively to his heel.

As the day wears on, the friends of the bride assemble, coming from every direction

in all their holiday finery—the men with pea-green coats and brass buttons; the women with wonderful bonnets and gorgeous shawls, the latter for the most part of foreign manufacture and of quite dazzling colour. Those men who are not so prosperous as to be owners of a Sunday suit of broad-cloth have, at all events, a sort of home-made, coarse, grey woollen stuff, which is held in equal veneration, and this suit they have donned for the occasion. Finally come a couple of pipers, skirling on their instruments as they approach the farm. The party having been arranged in couples, we set out on our journey across the moors, these pipers leading the way and startling the lonely pewits with their alarming din.

After a few hours' walking we come in sight of the blue waters of Loch Lyndal, with the inn of Brind nestled among the trees at the foot of the hill; while as luck

will have it, at this moment arrives the magnificent cavalcade of the bridegroom's friends, also preceded by two pipers. Into the inn flow both streams of people, occupying and almost filling the chief room of the place, while the indescribable clamour and discord of two or three bagpipes simultaneously playing in vain seek to drown the vehement conversation that ensues. In the midst of this uproar the "minister" walks into the room, and presently there is not a whisper to be heard. The good man's time, it seems, is precious; wherefore a little circle is immediately formed at one end of the apartment; Helen Stewart, with her rosy-cheeked bridesmaids, is led into this open space; the bridegroom, with one or two Carraig-dubh friends, likewise comes forward, and the ceremony begins. The minister prays in Gaelic; gives a short address to the pair before him, also in

Gaelic; declares them man and wife, likewise in Gaelic; and finally kisses the bride, which, too, is possibly a Gaelic custom. Then Duncan Stewart comes forward, bottle in hand, and offers the minister his *deoch-slainte*. The old man tastes the liquor in acknowledgment of the courtesy, gives the people a parting benediction, of course in Gaelic, and departs.

No sooner is he gone than Colin Stewart, with one spring, bounds upon the nearest table, and proceeds to tune his violin as a signal; whereupon those who are not inclined to dance move towards the wall or towards the door, while in the centre of the room are being formed couples for the performance of infuriated Highland reels. The girls toss off their bonnets and shawls, and set to work with a will. Upon the celebrity which they may that day gain may rest their chance of a prospective husband, for your Highland peasant, in

choosing a wife, does not always seek her who will be his best farm-servant, as has been laid to his charge. Donald can admire grace and suppleness, and so forth; and if he does not require that his wife should be able to perform upon the piano, it is possibly for the reason that he has no piano upon which she could perform.

The most imposing part of the day's celebration, however, was to come. Having indulged in reel dancing, pipe playing, and whisky drinking almost to satiety, both parties, joined into one, proceeded in the gathering twilight to wend their way towards the farm of Carn-sliosach. Immediately behind the pipers came Helen Stewart—now Mrs. M'Alister of Carraig-dubh — with her young husband; then came Duncan Stewart and old Mr. and Mrs. M'Alister; while in their wake stretched out a long line of friends,

coupled as their taste or friendship suggested. A sore and perplexing journey it was as nightfall came down upon them, for over these wild Highland moors was no footpath or even the shadow of a footpath; so each man and woman, young man and maiden, had to stumble on through the darkness, picking for himself or herself what piece of ground seemed in the gloom to be most trustworthy footing.

But at length we heard the barking of the Carn-sliosach dogs, and presently our troubles ceased, for no sooner had we arrived than we were ushered into a large barn, lit up by great chandeliers composed of long pieces of wood radiating from a common centre, at the apex of which pieces was placed a candle. Then along the barn were arranged a series of narrow tables with forms on either side. Without more ado, the girls once more threw aside their

shawls and bonnets, and sat down to await supper.

. First came soup, served out in large trenches, and so thick that one could almost have cut it with a knife; black, likewise, it was, and excessively unpleasant in odour; while the manner of its preparation was not exciting to the appetite, as the greasy mixture had been obtained by boiling from forty to fifty fowls, in those large iron boilers used on other occasions to prepare food for the cattle. However, the soup was taken away, and in its stead we had the fowls themselves. The rapacity with which some of the men seized upon these unlucky birds was something to make one shudder. A piper, who adorned the head of one of the tables with his presence, scorning carving, laid hold of one of the fowls, and, deliberately tearing it in halves with his unwashed and snuff-covered fingers, proceeded to eat the one half while placing

the other on the present writer's plate. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to state that objection was taken to a sauce composed of snuff and whisky.

All parties seemed to enjoy this more profuse than select supper immensely; and as the clatter of knives and forks died down, trays containing oatmeal cakes and cheese, with supplies of clean glasses, were handed round. In a short time, however, the younger members of the company began to manifest signs of impatience, and as one of the pipers struck up the "Earl of Gordon's Strathspey," it was taken as a signal that dancing should be resumed. Presently the long table and forms were denuded of their white coverings, and carried out to the side of the stream; while inside, young M'Alister and his blooming bride proceeded to lead off the first dance. The wild, hilarious merriment which followed altogether eclipsed the mild performances of

the "bottling-night." Several couples insisted on dancing outside on the green sward in front of the farm, and bore off with them two of the pipers. The older men, with those who were not dancing, retired into corners for the more comfortable enjoyment of their Lagavulin. Then we had speeches and toasts, and songs, native and foreign. One song seemed to be a special favourite, as at least three men persisted in singing it, the one after the other. The following is a translation of the opening lines, certainly not intrinsically brilliant :—

"O, will you be married, Maggie?
O, will ye take a man?
O, will ye be married, Maggie?
Will ye take a husband?
He lives in Kilchiron,
His name it is Red William,
His legs are as two crooked sticks,
But he lies in bed sick of love; etc."

These various amusements continued till morning, when the people separated to

resume their ordinary avocations. But the following night they returned, and again the same orgies took place; nay, for a week there was constant drinking, dancing, and singing at Carn-sliosach, while, strange to say, the farm work seemed to be not in the least impeded. How any human beings can so tax themselves night and day, and survive it, is more than we Lowlanders can understand; certainly they did so, and seemed to take the greatest pride and pleasure in their laborious merrymakings.

PUBLICANS AND SINNERS

PUBLICANS AND SINNERS

"He was a wonderfu' man, the father of our minister," said my Aunt Blair to Mrs. Macaulay; "a wonderfu' pious man. Weel do I remember that day on which he brought those worthy servants of God, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, and Mr. Ralph, and Mr. Kid o' Queensferry, to our house, which was then in Whitburn. That was a proud day for our Eben (Jamie wasna born then); but it was nae mair than we had a right to expect; for the Merles, as ye ken, Mrs. Macaulay, have been kent far and wide, for generations, to be pious and godly people."

"'Deed, yes!" said Mrs. Macaulay, who

would as soon have thought of questioning the authenticity of the Confession of Faith as of doubting the statements of her grand old friend.

"And weel do I mind the peculiar way that auld Mr. Brash had o' stirring his tea, puir man! He took more time to it than maist folks, and did it sedately and thoughtfully; no as if he was in a hurry to partake o' creature comforts. But it's a mournfu' world atweel, as Solomon saith, 'What hath man of all his labour, and o' the vexation o' his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun!' and sae, just before the present Mr. Brash was ca'd to Muirend, the auld man depairtit this life, and sae was hindered from seein' his son's advancement."

Why did Aunt Blair pause when she came to the word "son"? That very morning she had come into my room—where I still lay in bed from loss of

blood—and remonstrated with me, in her stately, dialectic way, on the exceeding sinfulness of my having dealings with a publican.

"Your father is grieved," she said; "nor is that a'. It is no for the temptation o' strong drink; he kens brawly there was nane o' our family but is proof against that. But, Jamie, he has another sore suspicion troubling his mind. Will I say it?"

"Surely, aunt."

"Then, Jamie, he is led to predict a sad future for ye, if ye go about this public. Indeed, Jamie, I saw he was thinking about his only son marrying the daughter of a public-house keeper, and if sic a thing should happen, as I pray God to forfend, weel ken I he would cry wi' Rebecca, in the bitterness o' his heart, 'I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of

Heth . . . what good shall my life do me?'"

But whatever cause for anxiety my father may have had in this matter was allayed by the one feeling of expectation becoming general in Eastburn and over the whole country-side. Next Sabbath was to be a great day—a day to be marked with a white stone. Dr. Brown of Haddington * was to preach in Muirend kirk.

The Sabbath morning came round, bright, and blue, and breezy; and there were such numbers flocked to hear this pious servant of God, that the little kirk could not contain them by one half. Wherefore Dr. Brown bade them go out to the churchyard, which they did; and there, in the sunshine, looking far down on purple miles of moorland,

* John Brown of Haddington, Scotch theologian and scholar; born 1722; published "Dictionary of the Bible" 1778; "Self-Interpreting Bible" 1769; died 1787. To later editions of the "Dictionary of the Bible" a Life of John Brown by his son has been affixed.

they sat on stones or on the grass, while the old man told them of the living springs and beautiful valleys of the heavenly Canaan. Not full of the terrors of the law was this sermon, as has been objected to the sermons of some of the Secession preachers.

That point on which John Brown of Haddington, and his spiritual fathers, the Erskines, mainly delighted to dwell—as may yet be seen in their printed works—was the wonderful riches of Christ. They were never wearied of this subject. These sermons of theirs, which have been preserved, are full of it. And on that beautiful Sabbath morning—long to be remembered by many a one there, when the old man who spoke to them had passed away from this earth—he told them of "the holy city, the new Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Looking far across the moor that lay between him and the Tinto Hills, he saw the little cottages

dropped here and there amid the brown heather, and spoke to the people before him of the many sore trials and vexations of this life. "But," added he, with kindling eye, and finger lifted up to the blue heaven, "all this will be forgotten in yonder holy city of our God. For there, having been washed in the blood of the Lamb, having gotten the white stone with the name written thereon, 'God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things shall have passed away.'" And so the service proceeded, quiet and solemn in its simple ritual. Nor was it without some of that wild fire of eloquence which had been handed down from covenanting forefathers; for eloquence is little else than vocal earnestness, and surely those men were in earnest who rose up individually to do battle with a collected

power, and with an authority that almost arrogated to itself the infallibility of the Church of Rome, about what appeared to some people a ridiculous matter of conscience. And yet, as Eben Merle said, it "didna seem ridiculous to him, that a man should stand up for his right to fecht for his ain soul against the devil, without interference from the General Assembly o' the Kirk o' Scotland, or ony ither assembly o' mortal men."

In the evening, when my father was sitting by his own fireside, reading Mr. Hutcheson's "Exposition of John's Gospel," and when I also was there engaged in a similar fashion, the latch of the door lifted, and Mr. Brown entered with outstretched hand. He had walked across the moor to pay a visit to his old friend, attended only by a member of Muirend Session, a long and "spaly" man, beside whom Mr. Brown looked like a well-knit

Saxon sentence, terse, firm, and vigorous, placed in front of a long Latin-English one, full of ins, and pros, and cons. And as Aunt Blair drew in a chair for them to the fireside, "she trusted that Mr. Dryhope hadna been wearied in crossing the moor."

"No, Mrs. Blair," said John Dryhope, seriously, as being somewhat in awe of the venerable dame, "though some o' the shengles are verra deep, and the grun unco sliddery."

"I wouldna, Mr. Merle," said the minister, "have interrupted your private meditations on a Sabbath night, had I not to leave for Stirling early to-morrow morning; for I consider the practice o' visiting on Sabbath nights, chiefly for the purpose o' gossiping—now becoming fashionable in our big towns—as maist reprehensible."

My father was thinking of sending over for John Macaulay, but this settled the point.

Then Mr. Brown, knowing how they should best enjoy the visit, and put it to most profit, bade me draw in my chair to the fireside. He then placed Alick between his knees, parting back the light brown curls from the lad's forehead, while my father began to speak of those matters over which he had been gravely pondering for some years back—matters which it had been vain to lay before the like of John Macaulay. Not of the broader points of the law and gospels were they—not of heresies, though heresies then, as now, were rife—not even of the Marrow, for the Marrow controversy was well-nigh at an end. But on such points as the Experience of Believers, the Manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the Voluntary or Involuntary Acceptation of the Spirit by Sinners, Eben Merle wished to have his own opinions confirmed or refuted.

And in course of time my father thought

the moment had arrived for the introduction of his more immediate perplexity. He was not without some hope that this man of God—so great an authority in the Church, so skilled in all the mysteries of human evil and Divine good—might be instrumental in bringing him help.

"Mr. Brown," he said, approaching with some timidity a difficult subject, "we have had changes in Eastburn since last ye were here. It is with no little sorrow I maun tell it, but there is now a public-house in the place."

"A public-house in Eastburn?"

"Even so, sir," said my father; "and it is a sair thing for me to sit here the night and say any such thing. For I hae been proud o' this bit village o' ours, sir, and was aye glad that you should visit it when you were this airt; for till this time there dwelt not a man in Eastburn under whose roof, Mr. Brown, ye wouldna

hae been pleased to sit. But it is far otherwise now."

"Ye perhaps take this matter too much to heart, Mr. Merle," said Dr. Brown; "'tis maybe but a place of accommodation such as I have sorely felt the want of at times; and surely it has not brought any positive evil amongst ye."

Now had the time come. Positive evil? For a moment my father glanced back to all the ancestry of the Merles; thought of their great and good name for piety; thought of that hereditary godliness that had come down without intermission from generation to generation. He thought of all the Merles now alive—without exception pious people; and the old man's eyes filled as he came to tell Mr. Brown—the man whose friendship was an honour to the whole family—that the last of that race had demeaned himself, and made himself unworthy. Yet he hesitated not, nor did

his tongue swerve as he uttered the words—

"Sir, my son there, I am loath to say, is in a fair way to be in daily communion with the publican himself, and with his household."

Sadly he said it, though firmly; and he looked in the old minister's face as that man may have looked in the face of his Lord, when he cried—

"Master, my daughter is even now dead, but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live."

I answered nothing to the accusation. The matter was not to be made better by talking. But Aunt Blair raised her head with an indignant look, and even interrupted Dr. Brown.

"Minister," she said, "ye must not leave this house thinking that my nephew goes drinking about a public. It is no his way to speak for himsel', or brawlys he could

tell ye what it is which takes him to Mr. Fraser, who is a decent man, in spite o' the manner o' his leevin'. 'Deed, sir, believe me, he wouldna harm ony leeving thing; and even when ither lads and lassies stand bletherin' by the roadside, he's awa' out oure the muir, picking up these queer stanes, which are innocent enough, I'se warrant, in spite o' what they say. And it is *that*, sir, which has taken him to Mr. Fraser, as can be made manifest to you if ye speir at himsel'!"

During this outburst my father had been sitting fidgeting with his satin vest, evidently about to break forth with an exhortation concerning the silence of women. But now he deferentially waited for a moment, to see if Dr. Brown would speak, which the minister accordingly did.

"You leave me little to say, madam. When I consider his family, and the way he has been brought up, I can well believe

that no nephew o' yours would go far astray. And you must remember, Mr. Merle, that this man Fraser may be a decent man, despite his calling—our Lord Himself was not ashamed to consort with publicans and sinners—and the publicans o' these days, as you know, Mr. Merle, had a worse character than those o' ours. And yet, Jamie lad, I'd have ye tak' tent o' your companions. A grand preservation of virtue is the choosing of honest and God-fearing friends; and such are seldom to be got about a public-house."

Suddenly Mr. Dryhope lifted his chin with a jerk, as though newly awoke from sleep. He took a pinch of snuff, looked wise, and said—

"As Mr. Ralph Erskine hath observed in one o' his sermons, 'The very sight o' gaunting and yawning smites others with the same trouble; a fit o' laughter will provoke others to laughter; and so will the

weeping and wailing of a few set an hundred weeping, merely by a sympathetic temper amongst people, which temper is doubly dangerous in places o' temptation!' And young people whose feet are apt to be unwary fall oftentimes through carelessness; for, as Mr. Erskine again says, 'It is but our own guiltiness and faithlessness that aims Satan's malice against us.'"

"Mr. Brown," I said, "were the devil's ends ever furthered by inquiry?"

"Never, lad."

"I think not. I take it, ignorance and Satan go hand in hand; and I think that if people would inquire as much as they imagine about a man's character, there would be less slander in the world. I know little of this man Fraser; but I take him to be an honest man, who has been unfortunate—and 'tis no wonder people are so careful about appearances, when

we see how charity is withheld from those who have been unfortunate in worldly things. Further, and not to continue a subject which is no pleasing one, it were better that we had more of this same charity even for the most wicked. I think it would be a poor thing for sinners such as we ourselves are to seek to limit the doctrine o' salvation by grace."

I had said what I had to say on that subject, and resolved to speak no more on it that night. But Mr. Dryhope, not seeing how therein he had been ignored, ventured forth again.

"But it is right for all young persons to flee temptation. He would be a fool who should rush into battle merely to try the strength o' his armour."

"What!" said Dr. Brown, with a quiet smile, for it was but seldom Mr. Dryhope was moved to deliver an opinion. "Ye should remember Mr. Erskine's context—

'Temptation is a school for training up Christ's soldiers; as a sword glitters by using, which would rust in the scabbard.'"

"Eh, but isn't he gleg at quoting!" whispered Aunt Blair, who was proud that John Brown of Haddington was taking her nephew's part.

Then Dr. Brown rose to leave; and my father took down his gnarled and knotted holly, to accompany his friend a part of the way over the moor.

Dr. Brown bade farewell to us all, counselling me to be diligent in the pursuit of all knowledge, but especially the knowledge of life everlasting.

"Like you," he said, "I was eager on such matters in my younger days, and my father used to say to me, 'Ah, Johnnie lad, I'm no ower anxious to ken much about the stars, for I'll get a braw glint o' them when I'm going hame to my Father's house.'"

They were going towards the door, when my aunt, not knowing very well how to testify her gratitude for the great honour done to her house, came forward with two little parcels.

"Minister, ye'll maybe take this bit parcel? And ye, likewise, Mr. Dryhope? They're no verra fine atweel, being but home-made bannocks."

"I must differ with ye, madam," said the minister; "I have tasted your bannocks before, and I never come this airt but the very wind seems to savour o' them."

And so, again bidding us farewell, they were gone.

"He was a wonderfu' man for a compliment," said my aunt, long after this day, "was Dr. Brown; and so grave was he, and dignifit in his manner, ye but kent he was speaking the words o' truth and soberness. 'Deed, it was worth while

baking bannocks a' your life to see the way he acceptit ane or twa—and the hamely way that he, a professor in Enbro', spak the auld-farrant Lanarkshire words."

My father, returning from his convoy, must needs call in upon John Macaulay, to impart to him the news of the minister's visit. John Macaulay's house was the largest in the village, by reason of the smiddy and his dwelling-house being in one. He had likewise a considerable garden behind; and John, being a thrifty man, sent to the Lanark market part of the produce of his fruit trees. Aunt Blair was also remembered pretty often with a basket of rosy-cheeked Lanarkshire apples —and better apples there are none—which she forthwith converted into the most wonderful and inscrutable of dumplings.

My father entered. John, his wife, and a little girl were sitting by the fire.

"Where is Flora?" was the first question.

"She just gaed up," said Mrs. Macaulay, a little nervously, "a wee while to see Robin Smith's lassie — that's Jeannie — wha is rather ailin' the now wi' her throat."

"She gaed up to see Robin Smith's son, I'se warrant," said Eben Merle, severely; "and whether or no, it ill befits any Christian household to have ane o' its members out stravaygin here and there on a Sabbath night, as if there werena such a thing as eternity to prepare for!"

This may have been rude of my father, for it is often hard to say where decision of character ends and rudeness begins. I know, at least, that the old man never intended anything he said to be rude; he was too kindly hearted for that.

"We saw whom ye had the privelege o'

entertainin','' said the smith, thinking enough had been said about Flora's absence.

"I was etchin' to send across for ye, but it sae happened that his first words were directed against the growin' evil o' Sabbath-day visiting."

"Thinking o' Mr. Brown," said John, "and o' Mr. Ralph Erskine, I took out the 'Gospel Sonnets,' and read ance mair the 'Think and Smoke Tobacco.' And really, Mr. Merle," he added, "ye maun acknowledge that a body has some authority for takin' a bit draw o' the cutty, when such an eminent and pious man countenances it."

"John Macaulay," said my father, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, "ye are like the bairns wha get a bowl o' milk and cogie o' parritch set down to them. They would fain drink the milk and leave the porritch untasted. And if ye smoke

upon the strength o' Ralph Erskine's sonnet, ye maun bear in mind that think comes before smoke. He says, 'Thus think and smoke tobacco,' and ye'll find, John, that the maist feck o' folk, while smoking, dinna bother themselves much wi' the thinking pairt."

"But surely, Mr. Merle, if we think to the best of our abeelities, we are not to be held responsible for the imperfections o' our powers."

"John Macaulay, listen to me. It seems to me that naebody has a richt to smoke but them who are compelled to think mair than is common to the human frame —sich as ministers, doctors, and the like. But for you and me, John, wha are but common people, we have nae real need o' ony sic thing, and it but begets an indolent and lazy disposition o' mind; for, as I was reading in Mr. Hutcheson the day, 'It is a fault incident to our nature

to be muckle addicted to our own ease, and to that which brings present comfort, and to abhor any lot or way of God's service which proves contrary to that.' "

"Verra true, Mr. Merle; but 'tis hard, hard to gie up a habit o' thirty years' standing."

"I didna bid ye gie't up, John; I only endeavoured to show ye wherein ye were wrang in attempting to get Mr. Ralph Erskine's authority to countenance it."

"'Deed, Mr. Merle," said John's wife, "I'm afeard he'll no stop it now, though I wish he would. I canna get the smell o' his tabawka scrubbed out o' my dresser, let me fecht wi't as I like!"

"When there's nae positeeve enactment, Mrs. Macaulay, against it in the Word, and when it has maist become pairt and paircel o' a man's being, I think he

would be a fushionless gowk to gie't up for one man's opinion or for another man's opinion."

And there spoke the blood of the Eben Merle of twenty years bygone.

ROUND AND ABOUT HAMPSTEAD

ROUND AND ABOUT HAMPSTEAD*

It was a pleasant mild morning in early March, with plenty of bright sunlight, and a strong breeze blowing fresh and grateful from the south. James Lawson's cottage lay down at the east end of the Heath, so that his Sunday rest was not broken in upon by the revellers who frequented the higher portions of the common. Indeed, it was only from the top windows of the

* The following two sketches, taken from "The Monarch of Mincing Lane," deal with the love-story of Philip Drew and Lilian Seaford. The girl is the penniless ward of an old Scotch couple (Jims Lawson and his wife), and the first part shows the dawn of love between this girl and Philip, the son of a rich merchant. In the second part Philip has renounced his people and his name for Lilian, and is spending his last few sovereigns in a holiday on the Dart. Lilian does not know he has quarrelled with his people. In the novel all ends well "after long grief and pain."

cottage that you could catch a glimpse of Highgate; and, when you left the house, you had to climb up the East Heath Road before you had anything like a view.

As they went up this road, the horizon gradually widened, until they could see, far up in the north, the white houses and the grey church-spire shining in the sun. The strong south wind had swept along all the smoke of the City until it lay in a great bronze-coloured cloud behind the gleaming houses of Highgate, while over their head the sky was of a keen blue, and the warm spring light fell on the green slopes of the common and the unsightly red gashes of the brickfields down in the hollow. You should have seen how the brisk breeze had brought a tingling colour into the young girl's cheeks, and how the sunlight played hide-and-seek among her rich brown hair, throwing clear shadows across the warm

colour of her face, or down on the perfect whiteness of her neck.

Yet what was there to mention about this commonplace stroll, on an ordinarily bright forenoon, through scenes which were sufficiently familiar to all of them? Years afterward we may look back upon some such insignificant morning, and find its every incident transfigured and made memorable by tender or tragic association. The lover walks with his mistress, and he does not see how fair the country is if looking at her eyes. But when she has gone away, and he returns to the old place where they used to walk together, he finds the landscape imbued with the mournful recollections of those happy times, and it is very beautiful as well as sad to him. Then he paid no attention to the tree under which they sat, to the stile at which they parted; but now both are sacred to him, and his eyes are full of tears as he

looks at them. Perhaps he goes down to the brook where they used to wander in the evenings: there are forget-me-nots growing there, but they grow for others now.

And if these three unconscious creatures who cheerfully wandered up the East Heath Road, and passed Well Walk, thinking of the brightness of the morning, if they thought of anything, had known with what terrible associations these commonplace localities were hereafter to be invested by them, they would not have passed them so carelessly. As it was, there was but little to attract their notice. Highgate was beautiful enough up in the silvery north, but Well Walk and the eastern end of the Heath, and the Vale of Health were not much to look at. As they strolled on, the two younger people listened with delight to a number of old-fashioned stories of her youth, which were told them

by Mrs. Lawson. Sometimes it was difficult enough for them to follow her broad Scotch; but then they were "airted" on to her meaning by the wonderful play of expression across the old woman's face. For herself, she enjoyed these reminiscences heartily, and she was possessed of the excellent memory which frequently accompanies sharp observation and a happy notion of fun.

As they descended into the vale, Lilian turned to admire the pretty lake, and grotto work, and shrubbery, down in the hollow. There was no human being about the place on this morning, no trace of the flashy dissipation which at certain seasons invades Hampstead Heath; and, in the clear light and the silence, these poor tavern decorations seemed quite pretty and pleasant to look at. Then they crossed over, and ascended the other side of the little valley.

"Don't you think," said Lilian, looking

up to where the line of the road ran along the blue sky, "that when we reach the top we must find the sea on the other side?"

It was natural enough to think that the strong light and the strong breeze should be coming over to them from a great windy plain and sea; but when they got up to the road it was a very different prospect which met their eyes. The long stretch of western country lay under the bright spring sunshine, the faint lines of hedge and road fading into a thin blue mist that hovered along the hills by the horizon. Down in the south the houses of Hendon shone whitely among the thick trees; up in the north lay the scattered cottages of Finchley, with the pale stones of the cemetery glittering in the light; and in the far spaces between and beyond lay clumps of wood, and tiny glints of water, with here and there a farmstead rich in yellow stacks and red tiles. All around them, too, were the

dark-green patches of furze of the Heath itself, scattered among the rough sand-pits; over there stood a cluster of fir-trees, and a still blacker green; and everywhere were the tall leafless elms rising into the blue sky, with the sunlight shining on their green trunks and black branches. All this spring landscape, cold and clear and bright, was full of anticipation and promise—full of the tingling of coming life; but as yet there was scarcely a bird or a leaf visible. Some of the fields were green and shining (with the glossy rooks watching you warily as you passed), and here and there you saw a tree that was just tipped with buds; but the mild south wind blew as yet over rugged ploughed fields and miry fallow, and the sunlight shone on branches that were hard and black.

"The first wild flowers I have seen this year!" cried Lilian, making a sudden rush downward into a sand-pit, and halting by

the side of a large patch of furze, which was covered with half-opened yellow buds. She tried to pick a piece, but the jagged spears of the gorse were too strong for her slight fingers; and so she turned away with a petulant gesture of disappointment. Of course Philip was down at her side in a moment, engaged in damaging his hands severely and unnecessarily in trying to secure the largest piece of bloom. That trophy having been duly presented, they were about to climb up again to where Mrs. Lawson stood, when Lilian turned and confronted him.

"Do you know when furze is out of bloom?" she asked merrily, with a bright laugh on her face.

"No," said Philip.

"Why—when kissing's out of fashion!"

THE RIVER OF DART

THE RIVER OF DART

Here, down in Devonshire, Lilian was at home. She knew every lane and bay, every quiet nook and old ruin, and all the secret haunts of the wild flowers; and she took her two companions about with a sort of anxious care that they should be amused and gratified, and was filled with a proud satisfaction when she saw them pleased.

How could they tire of the perpetual change of picture visible from the large windows, or the warm terraces, or the exposed promontories of rock? Was there any hour of the day in which the land and the sky and the sea preserved the same aspect? On the evening of their arrival a

misty yellow sunlight lay over the bay, and the opposite coast seemed far and dreamlike in the haze. But next morning the land had come strangely and sharply near, so that you could see every house, and field, and hedge; a brisk breeze from the south-west was bringing up heavy swift masses of cloud over the sky, and these threw splatches of shadow on the great tumbling breadth of green waves that ran, white-crested, in from shore. The boats rolled in the harbour with creaking cordage, and the wind that blew through the small town was laden with the smell of seaweed. Towards midday the wind moderated, and the sun was faintly hidden by a fleece of grey cloud; the opposite shore receded, and the long line stretching out to Berry Head lay like a dusky bar of blue in the blinding grey light of the sea and sky. And then again, towards the afternoon, the clouds thickened and grew

thunderous; and suddenly—when one had forgotten all about sunset, and expected a grey and listless evening—there appeared a lurid glow of dusky brown in the west; the masses of cloud over Paignton shore became illuminated as if with fire, and their lower edges, with the sunlight shining on the other side, came down in a red smoke of rain. Behind these ragged streaks of crimson, again, there were glimpses of the far green and gold of the sunset; and this keener and clearer colour, as the thunder clouds slowly lifted, sent a pallid glow over the waters of the bay and the full tide of the harbour. Finally, above the clouds, there rose the clear stillness of the twilight, that glimmered on the fronts of houses high up on the wooded hills; and overhead, in the pale green sky, yellow stars began to burn.

They explored all the neighbourhood

too, and had small picnics down in secret clefts of the coast, where the sea had eaten out a semicircle in the red sandstone or grey rock, and washed up a shelf of clear white shingle. They drove down the narrow leafy lanes, with the tall banks and the wilderness of foliage about. Mr. Philip hired a yacht, furthermore; and they went cruising round the land, looking up at the precipitous cliffs, with their great caverns or bold arches jutting into the water, or looking far out on the blue plain of the sea, with the sails of distant ships, or a faint string of wild duck, sinking down into the horizon. It was a happy time.

"Don't you think," said Philip, as they sat down to breakfast on the morning of their departure, "that it would be very hard to die at Torquay, and leave behind the sea, and the clear air, and the sunlight? I shouldn't so much mind dying in a dingy hole in Islington, I think—in a sickly

atmosphere, with blinds drawn, and bottles on the table. One might almost be glad to get quit of the smell of physic. And going away from here—leaving that blue bay and the green country round about it—seems in itself a sort of little death."

"I am so glad we are getting a beautiful day, though, to leave," said Lilian. "This morning, when I looked out, the sea was green and windy; and over there, at Brixham, the land was quite hidden behind a mist of rain."

"And when I came down and found her," said Jims, "she was nearly wild wi' delight, and there was a glimmer o' sun behind the mist."

"And it was so curious to see a light green colour beginning to shine through," said Lilian; "the sunlight, you know, breaking on the hills behind the rain; and then the clouds lifted, and you could see the slates of houses in Brixham glittering

across the bay, and the sea changing from green to blue. And now look! the clouds have all disappeared, and the bay has grown still, and Berry Head has got misty and white out there."

When their luggage had been despatched to the station, to be sent on to Totnes by rail, they went down to the harbour, got into a small boat, and were pulled out to the yacht which Mr. Philip had hired. It was to be their last excursion in her; they were to leave her at Dartmouth.

And when the tiny vessel, outside the harbour, dipped over to the gentle wind that was coming up from the west, Torquay was already receding from them. How fair and stately she looked, seated white and radiant on the summit of her green hills! The morning sunlight shone on the great grey crags, and on the gleaming fronts of the houses, and on the dense foliage around the old abbey; while round

at Livermead the masses of red sandstone that finished the curve of the beach fairly burned in the sunshine, over the intense blue of the water. As they got further out into the bay a sort of silvery haze seemed to dwell over the place, only broken here and there by the glitter of a window that happened to catch the rays of the sun.

"Oh, Philip, we have been so happy here!" said Lilian, with tears coming into her eyes. "Why should we ever go back to London?"

And why? And it seemed to him that behind and encompassing the beautiful and smiling picture that lay before them there was hidden a darker circle—full of dismay, and trouble, and the weariness of waiting—into which they must soon enter. Why could they not stay here for ever? He was almost on the point of confessing to her the tender hypocrisy of

which he had been guilty during this brief and happy time; and then he looked at her face and her anxious eyes, and could not.

"You're no fitted to be the wife o' a man that has to battle wi' these times," said Jims, putting his hand affectionately on her shoulder. "Ye mind me o' a white kitten, that likes to play and frisk about a while wi' a reel o' cotton, and then snoozle down afore the fire on a thick rug. What would you think o' a man that could content himself to live a' his life up at the big hotel yonder, and do naething but kick his heels on the grass in the sun, when around him the world is working and storing, and they who have time are up in the great centre o't—in London—fechting in Parliament for them that are otherwise engaged? Them that are working have nae time to think and understand about laws; and yet the

laws are crushin' them, and takin' frae them to give to the wealthy idlers in the land what ocht to gang to them that are starvin' for want o' work. The taxation of the workin'-man should gang to help his poorer brethren, instead o' helpin' to fill the pockets o' them that are rich enough already. But folk are beginning to understand the duties o' the capitalists now; and there's many a rare battle focht o' mair consequence than Waterloo, or Peterloo either. And wi' a' this coming foward—singing i' the air, as it were—ye would like to have him leeve a' his life down by the shore here, like a limpet on the rocks, or a dandelion in the grass."

"Then there's no pleasure in life for anybody!" said Miss Lilian, contemptuously. "For if you happen to have no troubles of your own, you are to go and take up the trouble of other people—who won't thank you. What difference does

one man make? If the nation wanted Philip, it would have told him so long ago. He is not of much consequence to it; but—but—he's of some consequence to me."

She glanced timidly at Jims, with an arch look in her eyes and a conscious blush on her face.

"You selfish little heathen!" said Philip. "Do you know what blasphemy against the whole duty of man you are talking? If every single person were to take as an excuse that he individually would not be of much service——"

"I am not going to argue," she said defiantly, changing her position. "You always get the best of me there, because you have been to college, but I know I am right all the same."

"Well, of course," said Philip; "since the beginning of time women have been celebrated——"

With that she put her hand over his mouth.

"I have told you before," she said petulantly, "that I will not be called 'women.' You are always putting me in the ranks with all the thousands of women, you know, and some day you will be losing sight of me. I don't wish to stand to be compared with everybody you know; I wish to be all by myself. I am not a woman, or a girl, or anybody, or anything, except — just what you see."

And she threw out her two hands with a laugh, as if she were showing herself off.

"Do you think you could ever be lost in the ranks?" said Philip, taking hold of a curl of golden-brown hair that was near the white neck. "Wouldn't this be a decoration to single you out? Do you think that Perdita, dressed in her lover's

clothes, would have passed muster among Frederick's Pomeranian giants?"

"I don't think Perdita lived in the time of Frederick the Great," said she, demurely.

"Perdita lived then, lives now, will live always. When you and I shall have got out of this dream, that we call life, Perdita will still be going about with her flowers, and singing her snatches of old ballads."

"I wonder if she ever did live, and if she was happy?" said Lilian. "I wonder if Shakespeare ever saw any girl that he thought might be Perdita? Don't you think he must have been desperately in love to have written so tenderly about love?—and don't you think he must have suffered dreadful misery about love to have written so much about that? Other things he could imagine—ambition, or pride, or avarice — without actually experiencing

them; but I think he must have been very miserable about some one he loved before he could have written about it."

"Why, what do *you* know of it?" said Philip with a look of wonder.

"I know only by anticipation," she said wistfully. "I know what I shall suffer —if—if——"

She never completed the sentence. It was as if her soul had gone out of her, and was already moving in the years to come. Jims never liked these fits of strange brooding which fell over the girl's eyes, and he invariably interrupted them.

"I'm thinking," said he, "that Perdita had an extra chance of being happy, sa there was nae Parliament then to tak' her sweetheart frae her."

"Parliaments are for old men," said Lilian, sharply. "I would have no man go into Parliament until he is sixty, and fit for nothing else."

"You are too hard on me," said Jims with a smile.

"Oh, I didn't mean you!" she said anxiously, and at once taking his hand, as if to atone for her indiscretion. "You know I didn't mean you. I ought to have said that no one should go into Parliament who has got any relations, or any friends, or anybody who cares a pin about him."

"But look what such a Parliament would immediately do," said Philip. "They would set to work to destroy all conjugal and domestic ties, and make everybody as miserable as themselves."

"But nobody would pay any attention to what they did," said Lilian, scornfully.

"And we should have a very efficient Parliament," said Jims.

So the desultory careless talk flowed on, as they slowly made their way southward, with the drowsiness of a hazy sunlight around them, with the blue waves lapping

along the side of the boat, and a curl of white at the prow; with a gentle wind just filling the sails, and causing the pennon to flutter overhead. And now they were about to see the last of Torquay and its beautiful neighbourhood, for they had nearly reached the point of Berry Head. The spacious blue bay lay behind them; down there, on the left, the creek of Buxham, with its clustered houses and fleet of smacks; then the white line of Goodrington Sands, then the long brown curve of Paignton beach, on which Lilian had played for many a day when a child; and so round by the sandstone cliffs of Livermead to the massive hills and the shining villas of Torquay, with the Thatcher and Ore-stones jutting out from the point.

"Good-bye, Tor Hill, and Waldon Hill, and Warbery Hill, and all the houses and trees you have!" said Lilian, standing up and looking with a wistful smile towards

the receding shore; "good-bye, Paignton, with your pretty sands!—good-bye, with your fishing-boats and your rocks! I wish I could take you all into my arms and kiss you! Good-bye! good-bye! good-bye!"

And then, as the great cliffs and Berry Head interposed, and cut off, one by one, the various places on which her eyes lingeringly and fondly dwelt, the smile died away from her lips; and when the last house of Torquay was shut out from her sight, she sat down in the boat, and covered her face with her hands, and sobbed bitterly.

The gates of the old world—the fair world of her childhood and youth—seemed to for ever shut; and there opened before her another world, full of indeterminate terror and sadness, and the pain of renunciation. What might come she knew not; but she felt she would have to meet it alone.

"My darling," said Philip, laying his hand tenderly on the downcast head, "we shall see all these places again."

"We shall never see them again, we two together," she said, looking up with a white face.

"If you say anything like that again," he said, "do you know what I shall do? I will have this veritable and actual boat in which you sit turned round; and in an hour or so we shall run into Torquay harbour. Then, do you know what will follow, you timid little bird? Mrs. Lawson will be telegraphed for to bring down a special license with her from London; we shall be married in Torquay; and not only shall we see all these places together, but we shall not have them out of our sight ever after; for I shall remain in Torquay, and support my household by becoming—what shall I say?—a billiard marker. No; I should lose form down here. I shall be-

come a coastguardsman, and spend the day in leaning over the parapet of the quay and staring at nothing; or I may drive a cab. Do you know there is nothing more probable than that I may have to earn our joint living by driving a cab?"

She looked up with a glance of surprise; and he saw that he had made a mistake. It was not time yet to speak of what was ahead in his affairs. So he adroitly continued the conversation, as if the chance remarks had been only a bit of idle talk in which they had been indulging; and so, by-and-by, he won her round into a more cheerful humour.

But now the new line of coast, stretching down into the white haze of the south, opened out before them; and they sailed past the immense cliffs of limestone and rock, which fell sheer into the green water, with here and there a shelf of slate

gleaming through the thin veil of mist that the sun had thrown over the land. Spectral and vast loomed these silent cliffs through the heat, their craggy headlands throwing natural bridges out into the water, their steep sides seamed with rugged scars and black lines of caves. Over their smooth summits stretched a faint surface of green, with a few sheep or cattle visible only as specks in the light; while in some sheltered bay the rocks sloped more gently down to the water. There were trees and a cottage or two lying warm and snug in the valley, and a line of white shingle where the dark sea met the shore. From the splendid masses of Sparkham on to Down End Point, these successive promontories and bays were sufficiently familiar to Lilian; and yet she did not care to name them, so strange and unfamiliar they appeared in this dream-like haze. Indeed, at any time, there is something very

solemn in the look of the tall and silent cliffs that stand unmoved above the great murmuring plain of the waves, and are so still you cannot but think that an awful quiet has fallen upon them because they have through so many years held commune with the night and with the stars, and that they have grown mournful because they have looked over the sea towards the grey east and beheld the mystery of innumerable dawns.

Then, as they drew near the estuary of the Dart, they ran close under the black Mewstone—the solitary jagged mass of rock that stands out in the sea. Far below them stretches the long blue line of Start Bay, losing itself in a silver mist in the south; and as they turned inward from the sea they found themselves in the green haven of Dartmouth, with the old-fashioned little town huddled along the side of the steep hill that overlooks it.

Having rowed ashore to Kingswear, on the opposite side of the river, they put up at the Yacht Hotel there; and Jims must needs go out on the balcony, to look at the broad stream, the boats, the quaint houses, and the lofty stretches of pasture and fields of wheat that seemed to be tumbling over the chimneys. The mid-day sun was shining down on the place; but the hill is so vertical that, while it remained in shadow, the light only caught here and there on the top of a tree or the slates of a house; and these shone out in yellow from the misty blue behind. A still sleepy old-fashioned little place, with picturesque houses and walls, built down into the clear green deeps of the Dart, with glimpses of rounded hill and sunny pasture glimmering at the end of precipitous streets, and with a few villas on the outskirts buried in trees, and perched upon the steep rocks that rise from the water.

"This is anither place like Torquay," said Jims. "A man must either have his nose level wi' his neighbour's doorstep or else find himself lookin' down his sky-light window. I wonder how they keep the bairns frae flinging stanes down the chimneys?"

But Miss Lil, as they sometimes called her, would have no one say a word against the place; for it appertained to the Dart, and the Dart she had insisted on their seeing before returning to London. She had conducted them all over the neighbourhood that she was familiar with; and now, like the proprietor of a merry-go-round, she was going to give them "a good one for the last." When they praised the beauty of the country she was pleased; but she always said, "You have not seen the Dart yet!" And now they were on the very threshold of the mystic and beautiful region; and they were to carry

the memory of this day's wanderings with them to London, whither they were bound on the morrow.

"What if it were to begin and rain now?" said Philip, as they sat in the hotel.

"I should make you wait here for days or weeks, till it cleared," said Miss Lil, decidedly.

"You talk as if you were the owner of the whole country, you arrogant little woman," he said. "Whereas all that belongs to you is some of the blue of the sea that you have stolen into your eyes by constantly looking out on Tor Bay."

"The Dart is my river," she said proudly. "You talk of those rivers abroad that you have seen. My river is the Dart; and you will see whether it is not prettier than any river you ever saw."

"What shall be my punishment if I say it is not half so fine as the Danube, for instance?"

"Why, your own blindness," she said, with a toss of her head.

"But you have never seen any foreign river."

"That doesn't matter," she observed sententiously. "I *know* the Dart is the prettiest river in the whole world."

"And I know who is the absurdest little woman that ever looked on the prettiest river in the whole world. I wish I could write poetry, Miss Lil, and I would call you the Wild Rose of the Dart."

"But roses don't grow in rivers, you stupid boy!" she said.

"They grow by the banks of rivers; and isn't that the same?"

"There, again!" she said petulantly. "Whenever I talk common sense——"

"Which isn't often," he interjected.

"You bring logic into it, just to show you have been to college."

"I wish college had taught him simple addition," said Jims, frowning over a scrap of paper which Philip had handed him.

Mr. Philip, on being called upon to say what was the share of the hotel expenses at Torquay which fell to Jims and his young charge, replied vaguely, five pounds. Jims was not satisfied; for he would not entertain the notion that Mr. Philip should pay anything beyond his own expenses; so that Philip was forced to draw up an imaginary bill, which he presented to the old man.

"Three pounds ten and three pounds ten make five pounds!" said he. "I'm thinking ye'll no make your fortune as a clerk."

"Very well," said Philip, getting hold of the paper, crumbling it up, and pitching it into the grate. "You *would* have a statement, and now you're not satisfied. If you want to give me another five pounds, do.

Between the two of you I lead a happy life: bullying and grumbling from the one, sneers and contempt from the other. Now it is my arithmetic, now it is my logic, that is faulty. When I undertook to come down here, it was to have a pleasant trip, not to go into training for a senior wranglership."

"When you gentlemen have quite done fighting," remarked Miss Lilian, with a gracious politeness, "you may follow me to the church out at the point;" with which she left the room.

The next moment Jims, still looking down from the balcony, cried out—

"Losh me! there she is, all by herself, in the ferry."

"Come along, then," said Philip; "we shall soon overtake her."

"'Deed no," said Jims; "I m for nae mair scrambling among the rocks like a partan. I've had plenty o't lately. Gang after her yersel'."

Mr. Philip, rushing downstairs, found that the ordinary ferry-boat had left, but that a horse-ferry, with two or three horses and a waggon, was just being pushed off. Without considering, he jumped on to the raft as it was leaving the landing-stage, and took his place by the neck of one of the horses. It was an unlucky resolve. The small steam-tug which generally drags the ferry across was not in use, and there were only two men, with long oars, to pull this heavy craft across a broad stream, with a swift current running down. Their plan of operations was to pull the thing up the bank, where there was a slight back current, and then let it float down with the stream to the opposite side; so that Mr. Philip found himself being slowly taken up the river, while the ordinary ferry-boat was quietly plying both ways below. Nor was there much more progress made when the raft got farther over; and, indeed, a more

ridiculous spectacle could not well be conceived than he then presented, standing angrily and helplessly, in the middle of the river, with Jims grinning at him from the balcony of the hotel, and with Miss Lil ready to die of laughing at him from the opposite shore. He shook his hand at her; in reply she kissed her finger-tips to him in mockery, for there was no one near to see. When at length he gained the opposite shore, and began to scold her for her hard-heartedness, she was drying her eyes from the effects of her merriment, and was assuming a more sedate and gentle air, with which to walk into and through the old town.

"If the Dart is your river," said he, "you might find some better means of taking people across."

"Did you never try a horse-ferry before?"

"No."

"Then you deserve credit for your courage," she said, laughing.

He was glad to see that the happy light never once died out of her eyes. She was, in truth, in the brightest of spirits; for she looked forward to charming the hearts of her two companions with the scenery of her pet river as they sailed up in the afternoon. In the mean time the day was warm and fine, and there was overhead a clear intense colour, almost as deep as that in her eyes, as she and her companions wandered out to the rugged point on which the old church of St. Redrock is built, overlooking the narrow channel of the river and the broad ocean. They entered the small graveyard that is perched out on these rocks, and glanced over the brief narratives of deaths by sea and land which were inscribed on the weather-worn tombstones, with pathetic assurances that these

poor men and women were only "gone before."

"And here we must bid good-bye to the sea," said Lilian, with more cheerfulness in her tone than when she saw Tor Bay fading out of sight. "How blue it is."

They had strolled up from the old church and the ruined castle to the lonely downs above, and from the summit of the hill they were gazing out on the sea and the far ships. The wind had risen somewhat, and the great blue plain before them had ruffled streaks of green across it, with here and there the deep purple of a cloud-shadow moving briskly over the water.

"Look at it hard," she said to Philip, "and then shut your eyes suddenly, and turn round, and let us go away. And then ever after, when you want to see the sea, you need only shut your eyes and you will see it, just as it is now."

"When I want to see the sea," he said,

"I shall look for it in your eyes, not by shutting my own."

And so they turned away, and left the sea. When they had gone down the hill-side, and got into the cool shadow of the trees that overhung the road, Lilian stopped and put her hands over her eyes.

"Yes, yes, yes," she cried, "it is all here! Shall I tell you what I see? First there is the old grey church and the castle, and then the steep rocks going straight down to a little bay, with green water, and rocks, and sea-weed, and white sand. Then out there is the sea, blue and green, with a few tiny tips of white; and then, farther out, it gets grey, and there are ships on the line of the sky. Don't you see it too, Philip?"

He took down her hands from her eyes and held them.

"Look up," said he; and she turned the beautiful, frank eyes towards his.

"Yes," he said, "I can see it all here—every bit. Only the sea that I look at is all blue; and there are no clouds near; and it is safe and kind—not treacherous and angry like the one you speak of; and then, besides, it is a sea that I can take up to London, and it will shine there among the smoke, and people will not know where you and I get the sunshine for our house."

"Our house!" she said, almost sadly; and so, to prevent her thinking about this hazardous future, he began to try the effect of various wild flowers in her hair, and she took one of them and kissed it, and gave it to him. They were so young then, both of them; and overhead the sky was so fair.

By the time they returned Jims had got luncheon ready, and had provided a suitable and modest repast. Philip grumbled, nevertheless, saying that in honour of the Dart, and of the fair young show-woman who was to be their guide, something more

decorative in treatment should have been ordered. You would have thought this young gentleman had the mines of Golconda in his waistcoat-pocket to hear him speak; whereas the fact was, of the two, Jims was the moneyed man, and Mr. Philip he who ought to have been economical. But Mr. Philip was possessed by the thoroughly masculine notion that one way to please and gratify a woman is to give her ostentatious meals, such as would suit an elderly clubbist; and was not this the last day of Lilian's pilgrimage in Devonshire?

You should have seen the sedate little empress—dressed all in black, with a touch of white muslin round her neck—seated in the stern of the small steamer that was about to go up the Dart. At first she was calm and gracious, suffering herself to be pleased with the cool breeze, and the sunshine, and the moving by of the various

vessels. But when the tiny steamer had left its moorings, when Dartmouth was slowly left behind, and the wonders of the river began to unroll themselves as they steamed up the green tide, her repose and gentle satisfaction quite left her. She became anxiously delighted, and would give her companions no peace until they had examined every corner and bend of the stream. Now it was:

"Oh, Philip, isn't it lovely?"

Or, again, "Look, look, Mr. Lawson! These are the Mount Boone woods; and see how they come down to the river's edge! And that is Dittisham—that cluster of cottages smothered in orchards; and above it is Bramble Torr! Do you see how green the water is with the sea?"

So they sailed up between the overhanging woods, that lay dusky and warm in the sunlight, and had their masses of light

foliage mirrored in the smooth stream below. They glided as in a dream past the pleasant banks of this pretty Devonshire river, past the tiny villages, with the grey spire of a church visible over the trees, past steep hillsides with cattle and farmyards on them, past verdant knolls surmounted by some big old house. It was all very pretty, doubtless; and perhaps to one who was familiar, as Philip was, with the Scotch lochs and the South German rivers, it was no more than pretty; but they had to vow and swear, both of them, that there was no river like Lilian's river.

At length even the wonders of the Dart came to an end, as the small steamer was finally roped to its moorings outside Totnes town. And here they found their luggage waiting them at the hotel; and having wandered about the old place and visited the castle, as in duty bound, they

had some tea, and prepared to go out for a pleasant walk in the sunset.

Jims preferred to stay indoors, probably fancying that the two young people would as soon walk by themselves. Philip, however, got an opportunity of telling him in a few minutes' private conversation of all that had occurred and all that he had concealed.

"Were ye clean wud to come down here and spend money, when every shilling was o' consequence to you?"

"Don't you remember Lilian saying something about wishing to have this little trip a time of perfect enjoyment?" replied Philip, as if that were a complete answer.

"Bless me," said Jims, "if a man is to make a fule o' himself every time a woman asks him!—and I'm sure the lassie would never have allowed it had she known—— "

"That was precisely why I didn't tell her."

"And you'll catch it when you do," said Jims, with an angry smile. "'Deed, I never heard the like. When you should ha' been saving up every farthing ye had, when you should ha' been looking out for work, to come stravaging down here, and living like a king at that wearifu' hotel in Torquay. I never heard o' sich a daftlike trick in my born days."

"I think I never did anything more sensible all my life," said Philip. "The chances were that she and I should never have an opportunity again — at least not for a long while — of having such a pleasant time together; and if I had told her, she would not have allowed it, as you say. What signifies a few pounds?"

"Tell me this," said the old man, abruptly. "Do you mean to make your

own living, marry a wife o' your own choosing, and be maister o' your own coming and going? Or do you only mean to make-believe you're doing that, and hang on i' th' expectation o' your father turnin' round?"

"You don't know my father," said Philip, "or you wouldn't speculate on that chance. You might as well hope for Bramble Tor to turn round."

"Then you are positeevely determined to gang your ain gate?"

"Most decidedly," said Philip; "that is to say, I mean to do what that would probably be if it were translated into English. I dare say I know what you mean; and I mean to 'gang my ain gate.'"

"I'm no sayin' you're right," said Jims, with grave Scotch caution, "and I'm no sayin' you're wrong. Every man has his ain notion o' what's better for him in this

world; and it is no great maitter to any case, for it lasts so little a time. But, my certes, if you mean to make your own living, you'll find out that a few pounds is of mair consequence than ye seem to think."

"Probably," said Philip, with a fine carelessness. "But the money I spent down here would have been good for nothing in the way of helping me to work. The want of it will be a better spur."

The entrance of Lilian at this time prevented their further talk over the matter. She had on her outdoor costume, and stood at the door of the room.

"Who is coming?" she said. "I shall be your *valet de place* again."

Philip and she left together. They passed out of the town, and got down to the side of the Dart, by the alders.

The great glow of light from the west was shining along the tops of the woods, and farther down the crimson overhead was reflected in the bend of the stream, that lay like a line of blood between the green meadows. Most of the birds were silent now; but the blackbird's flute-like note was heard from among the trees down by the river; and occasionally, as they strolled along the narrow path, a thrush would send out a long, clear, wavering trill from the deeps of the bushes along the bank. They met no one but a young girl, who was coming home with both hands filled with flowers. She bade them "good evening" as she passed, and her voice seemed strange in the silence of the place; for Lilian had spoken scarcely a word since they left the inn.

"Why are you so very quiet?" he said. "Are you not pleased that our trip has

been so pleasant throughout, and has closed so pleasantly ? "

"It has been very pleasant, has it not ? " she said (her veil was down, and he could not see the expression of her face). "And this is our last evening and our last walk together."

"For the present, yes," said Philip, cheerfully.

She said nothing further for some time, until they had gone down to the bend of the river, where the red colour lay, and beyond that there was the dusk of the twilight, from which they both instinctively turned.

"Let us go back," she said ; and there was something in the tone of her voice, as they turned away from the ruddy stream and the silent trees, that made him regard more attentively the inscrutable veil that was over her face. The hand on his arm had been trembling for some time, and

all at once she said, in heart-breaking accents—

"Oh, my love, my love! Shall we never be here again, you and I?"

She turned her face up to him, and he saw now that she had been crying all this time, as they were walking down the river-path. And it seemed to him then that something more was required than the ordinary gentle assurances to remove the passionate despair into which she was plunged. So he said—

"Why do you ask that, Lilian? What are you afraid of? Do you know that, before I came down here, I gave up everything in the world for you, so sure I was that we two should go through the world together?"

And then he told her, rapidly and clearly, the position in which he stood towards herself and towards her friends.

He had long dreaded this necessity,

and he had pictured to himself what her reception of these disclosures would be. She would not consent to this abnegation for her sake; she would implore him to go back to his family; she would be in misery over what had happened, and blame herself for it.

Surely she could not have understood? The veil she had drawn back from her face, and now she looked up to him with a strange, proud, confident look in her eyes.

"Is what you tell me true?" she said. "You have done all this for me?"

"And have I not done right?"

There was an almost wild look—of courage, and joy, and triumph—passing across her face, and she said—

"I am not afraid now, Philip. It seems to me that you have come so much nearer to me that I need not be afraid. We will go to London together. It will not make

us afraid now, will it? Oh, my dear, my dear, you have made my heart full of love for you!"

Her eyes were wet and wild; yet there was joy shining in them. She turned round to have one last look at the Dart; and then she said to him, in a low voice—

"A few minutes ago, Philip, I wished that I was lying underneath the stream. You know they say—

> "'O river of Dart! O river of Dart!
> Every year you break a heart;'

and I thought it was mine the river had taken this year. And now I feel so strong and brave; and I am ready—oh, I am ready, my dear, to face twenty Londons, and fight them all for your sake!"

Then he stooped down and kissed her, almost solemnly; and he felt on his forehead the light touch of her lips, as though the wing of a butterfly had touched him.

It was the first embrace she had bestowed on him; it was his royal accolade; and there he became her knight, and swore to be faithful to this sweet mistress for ever.

THE FIELD OF BATTLE

I

OUR FLIGHT FROM MÜNCHEN-GRÄTZ *

When I arrived in Münchengrätz on the morning of the 28th of June, I found the little town in a state of the greatest possible consternation. The Prussians were

* The war between the Austrians and Prussians in the summer of 1866 is generally known as the "Seven Weeks' War." The decisive battle of Königgratz took place on July 3rd, King William I. commanding the Prussians, and Marshal Benedek being in charge of the Austrians. The attack began at Sadowa about 10 a.m., and the result was uncertain until shortly after noon, when the Crown Prince of Prussia appeared with reinforcements, and the Austrians were gradually beaten back, and finally forced into a disastrous flight. Over 400,000 men were engaged in this battle, and the Austrians lost 40,000 killed and 20,000 taken prisoners. The war decided the supremacy of Prussia to Germany, gave unity to North Germany and Venetia to Italy. It also led to the independence of Hungary.

advancing from Hühnerwasser — already their foreposts had encountered the fore-posts of our army; and from ten o'clock in the forenoon we could hear the dull throbbing of the firing, which to my mind most resembles the distant tumbling of a waggon of coals. The main body of our army was stationed immediately behind the village of Münchengrätz—a line extending almost to the hamlet of Bossin; but as yet we had no idea that the Prussians would eventually occupy Münchengrätz; for, as I said, our out-posts were on the north of the village, were pretty strong, and were, as we believed, to be supported by the whole strength of the army as soon as they were attacked.

It is not for me, who am a commercial man, to say what our military commanders should have done. Doubtless they know their trade better than I do. But what I

can affirm is this—that we in Münchengrätz saw the wounded being carried in from this fight at the outposts, while Prince Rohan, and Generals Clam-Gallas, Krismanic, and Hönigstein still remained in Prince Schwartzenburg's castle. The Prussians continued to advance—at least, so we heard in the town—and by twelve o'clock every shop in the place was closed. The people began to gather together whatever of their goods was most valuable and most easily carried; for it was known that a train for private passengers would leave Münchengrätz at two o'clock, and proceed southward by Buntzlau. You could not buy a cigar, or a loaf of bread, or a sausage, or a glass of beer—every place was closed; and had it not been that I was personally acquainted with the excellent landlord of the biggest inn in Münchengrätz, I should have had starvation added to other discomforts. It seemed as if the entire town

had fled to the railway station; and there the crowd of people, carrying with them bundles wrapped in handkerchiefs, portmanteaus filled with bits of silver, plate, and other household luxuries, chests containing their best clothes, or the most portable of their merchandise—this crowd, I say, eagerly flocked into the station and surrounded the train that was expected to leave at two o'clock. A number of extra carriages were attached; and the people saw that they were likely to be all accommodated: it was the only train which the military would grant that day for the use of civilians.

I, also, might have left with this train; but, in the first place, I had some urgent business with one or two persons who still remained in the town; and, secondly, I did not believe that there was the slightest chance of the Prussians driving our soldiers out of Münchengrätz. Had we not an army

of nearly forty thousand men, commanded by brave officers? had we not the advantage of knowing the country well, with the Iser as a line of defence on our left? and had not the Prussians—at least, so we had heard—been routed everywhere along the borders as they crossed from Saxony? So it was that in this belief I remained in Münchengrätz.

It was not a very cheerful afternoon. The central square of the place, upon which my window in the inn looked, was wholly deserted—the shutters were on the windows of the small shops—there was no one passing along the narrow streets, except when a country waggon came rumbling over the stones, guarded by Prussian soldiers, and bearing a number of their wounded companions. What were the generals doing? We heard that they were still up in the castle, while the army lay inactive behind the town, and

the Prussians were cutting down our outposts without mercy.

The men with whom I had business to do not arriving, I went out to seek for them. The dull grey sky had now commenced to rain, and this added to the desolate look of the closed houses and empty streets. The still silence was only broken by the regular boom of the guns, that one fancied came always nearer. I could not find the men. I went to the railway station; the train had gone two hours before; they were not to be seen anywhere. As I returned to the inn, we heard that the generals had left the castle, and had gone no one knew whither—we were only certain that they had not gone in the direction of the conflict. The people who had ventured to remain in the town now discovered the box in which their temerity had placed them. Our army behind Münchengrätz did not advance; our foreposts retreated, pursued by the

Prussians; and towards evening it became evident that the latter were in the immediate neighbourhood of the town. What, then, was to be done? The heavy rain-clouds made the twilight fall more rapidly; and we still hoped that the darkness would cause a cessation of hostilities.

It was about half-past ten that I was seated in the parlour of the inn, by the window which looked out on the market-place. There was no screen on the window. Suddenly I heard a sharp metallic ring outside, and as I turned immediately to discover the cause, the whole square was lit up by a flash of bright orange flame, while a terrific explosion made the small houses shake to their foundation. It is impossible to conceive the startling effect of this instantaneous shock in the perfect stillness of the night; and for a moment I could not imagine what had produced such a strange occurrence. Presently,

however, the landlord rushed into the room, his face livid with fear.

"Did you hear that?" he cried.

"Yes, and saw it too," I said.

"The Prussians are firing upon the town. That is the first bombshell. Our houses will be burned—we shall be killed—the town will be in flames before the morning."

For the moment he seemed beside himself. The grenade had come too near; he was unable to face the prospect of being shelled all night with the same equanimity with which he had borne the distant firing of the guns.

"They are just without the town," he said gaspingly.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Has not the bombshell fallen just outside in the market-place?"

"But they may be a mile and a half distant all the same."

"What does that matter," he said, pathetically, "if they can blow us up?"

"I quite agree with you," I said; "and I should be happy to run away from the place were it not that I should be sure to run against either the Prussian outposts or our own outposts, and either would certainly shoot me."

He sank into a chair, overcome by this horrible vision.

"Our army is down by the road to Fürstenbrück," he said presently; "could we not get away by the Kosmanos road? I know a way over the fields that would lead us thither."

I confess that I was as anxious to escape as he was. I could have done no good to our arms had I been ever so patriotic; and by this time I had despaired of obtaining my money from the men of whom I had been in search. Momentarily, too, the firing seemed to be coming nearer; and

though no more grenades fell in the square, it was evident that the Prussians were advancing, that they were near the town, and that as they could not in the dark know that any town was before them, they would continue to fire upon what they supposed to be the position of our troops.

So said I to the landlord, "If we remain here we shall be shot. If we go away we have at least a chance of escape; let us go away."

A very few moments sufficed for our preparation. I had no luggage; and I suppose my friend only took his money with him. I went to the front door and looked out into that blank darkness, where one or two lights were twinkling down upon the pools formed by the rain. There was no sound but the hissing of the shower on the stones, with the occasional dead throbbing of the guns; but it seemed to

me as if every dusky shadow of an archway or door concealed a group of watching Prussians. If the Prussians were not there, where were the Austrians? One could scarcely keep from believing that this silence was the silence of an ambuscade, and that so soon as one ventured forth from one's house there would again leap forth the swift fire and swifter bullet of some weapon, and so the end of all things arrive. The landlord caught me by the arm.

"Where are you going?" he said in a stage whisper.

"To Kosmanos."

"But if you go through the streets you will be shot to a certainty. I know a better way. Come!"

He dragged me in and locked the door. He took me to the back of the house; and having also secured the doors there, we made our way down through his garden.

At the foot of the garden was a tall brick wall, with some cherries, or vines, or peaches trained against it; here my friend had to grope about for a summer seat, with the aid of which we speedily got over, and clambered down into a ditch on the opposite side. From this ditch rose a cornfield on a considerable incline; and it was now that we first began to appreciate the pleasures of our flight. In the first place, the clayey soil was so slippery that we had to pull ourselves along by clutching handfuls of the grain, and every two or three minutes we found ourselves on our knees in the thick, yielding mud. Then the corn was, of course, dripping wet; and as, to avoid detection, we had to crouch along with our head and shoulders down, a very short time only was needed to drench us from top to toe. My companion began to puff and pant; I could hear him blowing

away from his face the rain that the corn dashed against his mouth, eyes, and nose; and at certain intervals I knew, by a strange sound, that he had sunk down on hands and knees in the soft earth. At another time I should have given him credit for a remarkable patience, in that not a word of complaint escaped from his lips; but I knew that this silence was occasioned by his fear of receiving a rifle-bullet through his head.

When we had gained the top of this incline we were even more cautious in our movements, for now there was the greatest chance of our running against the sentries, who, of course, would not pause in the darkness to ask us whether we were Austrians or Prussians. The cornfields now gave way to pasture-land, and we could discern vaguely the outline of bushes and trees against the black sky. Need I say that every bush

took the form of a man, and that every shadow of a tree seemed to be some tent, or sentry-box, or provision-waggon? We never lifted our heads but we saw some faint outline that sent a shudder through us, as we thought of the terrible swiftness of a rifle-bullet. Firing we heard constantly; but, though yet apparently some distance off, it was impossible to say that the army had withdrawn its outposts and gone to the south-east.

"I cannot go much farther," whispered the landlord to me, in a despairing tone; "this mud is too much for me. I must lie down and wait for the morning."

"If you fall asleep in this rain," I represented to him, "you will not awaken in Germany."

He only groaned, and then puffed again the raindrops from his face.

So we struggled on, blindly, stumbling down into ditches, and creeping up again,

crossing pathways and fields of all sorts of produce.

"I know the way," he said; "but I don't think we shall ever see Kosmanos."

He had scarcely uttered the words when I heard a suppressed shriek, and the next moment I knew that he had stumbled forward and fallen upon the ground.

"What is it, then?" I said.

"Who are you?" said a gruff voice; and I could now see before me the figure of a man, who was apparently a soldier.

"We are Austrians, and we want to go to Kosmanos," I said.

I watched the outline of the man's figure, ready to seize him if he lifted his arm. I knew it was my only chance, for if he fired once he would call a hundred of his companions. Fire once! Sure as two and two make four this man had been hiding. Probably sent out as a scout, he was down on his knees when

my friend tumbled over him; and to judge by voices, the soldier was a great deal more frightened than we were.

"Where are the Prussians?" he asked.

"How can we tell?" I said. "I hear, from the firing, that they are near Münchengrätz."

"And you are not spies, then?"

He was assuming a magnificent air of authority. Well he knew that we were not spies; and I can fancy that there was a blush on his brown face as he asked the question. He condescended to be satisfied with our response that we were not.

"You may go," he said grandly.

"Thank you," we said humbly.

"Mind you," he observed, as he went off, "keep to the right, or you will fall in with our army, and you will be shot."

"Thank you."

So again we stumbled on, and left the

poor scout once more to creep down and hide in the field.

It seemed to me that the night would never end, that the firing would never cease, that the rain was to continue for ever. I fear that the shock of meeting with the sentry had somewhat dulled the clearness of my friend's intellect. When I asked him if he still knew the way, his replies became more uncertain. He gave me vague assurance that it was "all right," and finally declared that he knew nothing whatever of our position.

The confession came too late. As he spoke I felt the ground give way beneath my feet, and the next instant I was slipping rapidly down a steep incline, whither I knew not. Suddenly my feet caught a bush; I was about to slip past this also, but I threw out my arms and caught the branches. I was safe.

But what was this broad line of deep

black beneath? I listened intently, and through the dripping of the rain I could hear the murmur of water. It was the Iser; and I was but a few feet from the brink.

"Was, dann?" I heard the landlord say, in a terrified whisper.

He had paused on the brink, and was doubtless peering down into the gulf into which I had fallen. I knew not whether to move or remain by this bush until the morning; but as my eyes became more accustomed to the place I recognized the outline of other bushes, and, a short distance off, I saw the bank was covered by young trees. Cautiously (I feared that deep line of black water more than any sentry or musket) I crept along on hands and knees, and reached the miniature forest. With what a thrill of joy I clasped the first trunk—the slim stem of a birch tree! In a few minutes I

had clambered to the summit, and here my friend received me with both his trembling hands.

"I thought you had fallen into a quarry," he said.

"Worse; I was nearly in the Iser."

"The Iser!"

"That is the Iser down in the hollow. Don't you know where we are now?"

"Ah! the Iser?" he said vaguely; and I knew that he had no better notion than before of our whereabouts.

"Yes, the Iser," I said, in no very good temper. "I thought you knew all this district."

"And so I do," he said piteously; "but how can one tell in the dark? And the Iser runs for miles; and how am I to tell which part of the Iser it is?"

So there was nothing for it but again to blunder on the same wild tramping through corn and over mud—hour after

hour—until a thin grey light began to steal along the face of the sky. We now kept pretty much the same course as did the river, my companion having recovered his scent. For some hours the firing had totally ceased, and as the day-light broke over the dull plains we could detect no dark lines of uniform through the white smoke of the morning mist. At seven o'clock we saw before us—Kosmanos!

If you look upon the map you will say we took a long time to walk that short distance; but no one knows how far we wandered in the darkness of that horrible night. Our stay in Kosmanos was short; so soon as our clothes were dried we again set out for Jung-Buntzlau, and remained there the following evening.

The landlord in Buntzlau thought to reap some profit by the war; and, at a late hour of the night, said he could only give me a room if I paid five

florins for it. I paid the five florins, and the next morning went to the magistrate, who forthwith sent for the man. The truth of the matter having been established, he was ordered to return me four florins and fifty kreutzers, and to pay besides five florins to the poor-box.

Then I bade good-bye to my friend, the other landlord, who said he would remain in Buntzlau until he could return to Münchengrätz, and set out for the south.

II

OUR QUARTERS IN HÖRZITZ

An extraordinary piece of good luck befel our little party in Glitschin. We had wandered for nearly an hour through the mud and rain and darkness of that miserable little town, in search of such modest luxuries as a supper and a sack of hay. Every house was full, every small inn crammed, and we stumbled over the rough stones, over heaps of wet straw, and between ammunition waggons, in vain. About ten o'clock, however, we caught sight of a large room in which had congregated a crowd of Bohemian peasants, their ragged appearance being softened by a blue halo of thick tobacco smoke; and with joy we observed that

one of the rude home-made tables was unoccupied. We entered; the landlady was gracious. A Prussian soldier, fast asleep on the form which was placed against the wall, was begged to sit upright, and thus we obtained seats.

"Can we have something to eat?" said Waldek.

"Yes, certainly," said the woman, running off, and presently returning with a big, round loaf of dark-brown bread.

"You have nothing else?"

"No," she replied, looking very much hurt.

Were we princes or travelling Englishmen that we wanted more!

"And I can give you beer, also," she said, in a quite sumptuous manner, as though this prospect would be to us (as indeed it was) a glimpse of fairyland.

"That is good," said Waldek; "and can we sleep here to-night?"

"Ja, freilich," she replied, momentarily growing more magnificent in that splendid self-consciousness of being a good genius. "I will let you have the chairs and forms when the men have left, and when the soldiers have gone to their rooms."

So we temporarily secured this accommodation by leaving as deposits the persons of Vecko, Waldek, and Rosenfeld; while Heinz and I once more set out through the darkness to see if our good fortune would further attend us. In the centre of Gitschin is the square which ordinarily forms the market-place, but which was now filled with Prussian waggons. Around the square the houses project from the first storey upwards, and are supported by pillars; while in the rustic piazza underneath are the chief shops of the town and two hostelries. Forcing a passage through the dense crowd of people and soldiers, we reached one of these

inns, and were greeted by a savoury odour of cooking. As all the rooms were full we went into the kitchen, where were a lot of women running about in a seemingly distracted state. A young lieutenant had unbuckled his sword, and put it underneath the table; and was now, with a saucepan in his hand, bending over one of the stoves, and watching the eggs he was trying to make ready. Another officer came in—a much older man, with green spectacles—and with a grave accent asked how the affair went.

"All right," cries his younger brother; "bring me a plate, will you?"

A third officer made his appearance, with a large loaf in his hand. He asked several times for a knife; no one would attend to him.

"Mein hübsches Mädchen, will you not give me a knife?" he said, putting his arm coaxingly round the waist of a young

girl who was about to lift a bit of steak from a pan.

She made a quick movement to free herself—the steak dropped on the floor—and she turned to him with indignation on her round, rosy face. In an instant he had picked up the piece of meat with his fingers and carried it off.

"You see, it was my fault, my girl, and I must eat the steak myself," he said, as he departed in triumph.

And now Heinz put in his plea. Would she kindly cook something for us? We should be glad to make room for ourselves in the passage or elsewhere, if she would only give us plates. He would pay anything that was asked.

Whereupon she turned upon him. "Do you think we are Prussians? If we had the meat to cook you should have it without being robbed. But when we have it not, what then?"

So we disconsolately left, and, passing underneath the church tower, skulked along the front of the houses which here face the Hörzitz road. Judge of our delight on looking through one of these windows and seeing within a saloon, with only a few civilians and one or two officers in the place, who were seated before a table *with a white cloth upon it.* We stole into the passage.

"Do you think there is a chance of our getting some supper here?" asked Heinz of the first man who made his appearance, and who turned out to be the owner of the place.

"Certainly."

"I mean some cooked supper."

"Certainly."

"And beer?"

"Certainly."

A broad smile of joy broke over Heinz's roseate countenance.

"And could you send a messenger for our three companions, and give them also supper?"

"Certainly."

"And could you lodge us for the night?"

"I could give you a room, and put some straw beds on the floor," said this king of men.

Such was our good fortune in Gitschin. There was a different story to tell in Hörzitz. As we entered the little town, which had lately been the headquarters of the king, we encountered an evil omen in the crowd of people that had assembled round a small white building which bore the inscription, "Office for the billeting of the wounded." Dark stories were afloat of numbers of soldiers having been found in the fields and the ditches long after the battle of Sadowa, and it was expected that on this very evening these unfortunate creatures, who, to the pain of their wounds,

had added several days' exposure to bitter cold and rain, would arrive at Hörzitz. Where were they to be housed? As we walked along the narrow, muddy street we were told that there was not one of the small white-washed buildings which had not already received its apportionment of the wounded; and any further accession to these numbers would only glut the rooms, which were already too full, and add to the general misery. The extent of accommodation to be found in the different dwellings was already pretty well known to the officers who had charge of the billeting; but in view of this fresh demand upon their resources they were again visiting the various houses and inns, armed with authority to claim and obtain the last inch of room.

The landlady of the hostelry to whom we had been directed was in a state of hysterics. Utterly regardless as to whether

her hearers were Austrians or Prussians, she was pouring forth lamentations over the ruin of her house, much to the embarrassment of a large-bodied, soft-faced, servant girl, who stood behind her mistress and waited for orders. The large apartment was filled by a company of peasants, Prussian soldiers, and others, who certainly made quite sufficient noise; but high above the buzz and din of conversation soared the thin, shrill voice of the woman, as she denounced the monsters who had left her house and cellar a wreck. She took a seat beside Waldek, and began to repeat to him the tale of her sufferings which we had already heard in several parts of the room.

"It is very bad," he said, compassionately;—"but will you be good enough to see that what we want for supper is being got ready?"

"And my Chateau-Margaux, that I had

from Vienna direct—that, too, they stole. Everything — everything stolen! When one has worked all their life honestly, and hoped to lay past something—then to have it all—all taken away in one day!"

"It is, indeed, shameful," said Waldek; —"and can we have supper soon?"

"My house clock, too—what did they want with that?"

"What, indeed!" said Waldek, indignantly;—"and would you please let us have supper?"

"Do they want a house clock for the army?"

"Certainly not," said Waldek;—"and do you think our supper is ready?"

"They are robbers—robbers every one! They take with them everything; they leave only ruin behind."

"That is true," said Waldek; "and pray, do you know if we can have some beer to our supper?"

"Beer? No; there is not a drop in the house. Everything—I tell you—everything stolen."

She began to cry; while the girl standing patiently behind her assumed an expression of deep grief. She might have been crying still, had not five artillerymen tramped into the room, and demanded beer.

"How can I give you beer?" she whimpered. "You have left me none."

"What do you mean?" said one of the men, angrily. "I never saw you or your beer before. And if you have not beer, bring wine—directly!"

She rose from the chair.

"And please don't forget our supper," suggested Waldek, as she was about to go.

"You shall have it at once; but—but—these last few days have turned my head."

About three minutes thereafter, we heard a magnificent uproar in the kitchen; and

this woman's voice, not sobbing forth her sorrow, but angrily and loudly denouncing the soft-featured girl. Presently the latter came sleepily into the room with some plates; followed by her mistress, who continued to pour out the vials of her wrath upon the poor, dull-eyed, fat-shouldered creature, who had to encounter the eyes of all the people. What a virulent little woman it was! She watched after the girl — she pursued her with that sharp, stinging tongue; and we wondered at the bravery of the soldiers who had dared to rob this scorpion of her young. The domestic turmoil had scarcely ceased when another tumult arose, in which one could detect the deep voice of a man.

"What do I care for your guests? You must have the room cleared out in five minutes, I tell you."

Here the shrill voice of the woman broke down into a sobbing remonstrance.

"I have given you my whole house, except this one room. Is that to be taken also, and these people turned into the street?"

The officer, for such he was, made no answer; but in a few minutes there entered several men clad in loose white canvas. In an inconceivable short space of time they had turned out into the passage chairs, tables, and all articles of luggage; whilst the travellers, who had been looking forward to the luxury of being allowed to sleep on the forms, which were here covered with leather and stuffed, were politely but firmly ordered to follow. Then these emissaries of the hospital officer proceeded to drag into the apartment a number of large straw mattresses, which were ranged along the floor, and finally covered with two white sheets. The men left the field —lazaret was ready.

Vecko, Heinz, Waldek, and Rosenfeld

stood in the passage, watching a lot of dusky figures which one could at times see in the dark street outside, as they passed to and fro before a glimmering light. Presently three of the officer's sprites appeared, carrying a young man of about twenty years of age, whom they bore into the extemporized hospital. He wore a white coat, tight blue trousers ornamented with yellow braid, a peaked blue cap, and he had three white stars on his collar; he was therefore a non-commissioned officer in a Hungarian regiment, and, as he afterwards explained, had been shot through the arm at Sadowa, where he had since lain in a peasant's house. He seemed quite comfortable, and smoked his cigar leisurely as the other men were being carried in.

"They are very good to us," he said. "You see there is nothing to prevent my walking, though I became a little giddy at

times; but they *would* carry me in from the waggon."

Those who followed him were less fortunate. One after another they came, helplessly clinging to the neck or shoulder of the men who carried them, some of them crying, most of them groaning piteously as they were being jolted about.

"You, also, were wounded at Königgrätz?" asked Heinz of one young lad with a swarthy face and jet black eyes and hair.

"I don't understand," he said.

"An Italian?"

"Yes?"

Another and another gave the same answer, some of them with an eager question as to whether there was an Italian doctor there; others languidly, as if it mattered little now whether they had medical aid or not. When as many men as the room would hold had been carried

in, the door was shut, and we saw no more of that sad spectacle.

Meanwhile the people who had been expelled held a council of war in the passage. Vecko had perched himself on the top of a beer-barrel, and vowed that no man or woman would deprive him of that seat during the night. Heinz was sitting on the stair, wondering if that also would be "requirirt."

Waldeck proposed that we should at once set out—it was now eleven o'clock,—walk during the night, and sleep in some peasant's house the next morning or the next forenoon. Rosenfeld said nothing, but the first time the landlady passed he jumped up and approached her, twirling his hat as usual. She was inexorable, indignant, violent; she looked upon us as fellow-conspirators with the hospital officer, and would pay no attention. He repeated his entreaties; he represented

how much we were obliged to her for kindness already received; he desired to have only a barn and some straw. She began again to complain of her grievances; that was a sign of relenting. She hinted that there was a hayloft—yes, there was a hayloft—but one or two gentlemen had already engaged a space; and finally she called upon that soft-faced young woman to bring a candle and take us upstairs.

It was a long, narrow hayloft, which naturally smelt of damp, seeing that from one end to the other hung lines of wet clothes, which were supposed to be drying. Underneath these various garments and table-covers and towels we crept, and arrived at a clear space where no water had been dripping on the floor; and here the girl kindly brought us an armful of fresh straw, which she disposed into layers. Heinz was the first to lie down, and boldly wrapped the straw right round him,

having some prophetic intimation of what was coming. We followed his example; but the girl had not yet departed with the flickering light of the candle when I saw a very large figure emerge from behind the screen of white cloth. Then came another.

"Are we to sleep here all the time we are in Hörzitz?" was the querulous inquiry of the latter, as he stumbled over Heinz's legs.

"Sacramente! There are men here," he cried; "and here is the Englishman! Why, how in the world have you got here?"

The new-comers were no others than Drs. H. and N., with whom I had travelled to Turnau; and this was the sort of accommodation offered to men who had given up their time and money, and run some considerable personal risk, in order to help the wounded.

"How did you come from Turnau?" I asked.

"In a 'required' waggon. And why have you come here without a travelling-rug or a top-coat?"

"Because I had to walk, having no authority to steal a horse and cart."

And it soon became apparent that without some covering there was no sleep to be had in the garret that night. There was a small window in the place, ingeniously arranged so as to allow a healthy current of air to pass through the hayloft night and day. We knew it was raining outside, and the wind that came whistling into the loft seemed to be both damp and intensely cold. Every few minutes one could hear his neighbour making a fresh effort to heap straw over himself; and then, in a few minutes after, turning round with a groan about the bitter cold. The night seemed as if it would never end—as if the weary

flashing of the rain outside and the shivering currents of air inside would never cease. Joyfully we recognized the first light-grey of the morning; and at three o'clock, by mutual consent, we went downstairs to the kitchen.

Here there were about five-and-thirty men and boys fast asleep, crowded upon the floor, upon forms, tables, and chairs—wherever there was a support for the head; more especially had they monopolized every bit of space around the large stove, which was still warm with a slumbering fire. They were mostly poor country people, perhaps having fled when their houses were burned down; and very likely they were not particularly sorry thus to secure a good night's rest without having to pay for it in the morning.

About half-past three the servant began to make coffee, and this intelligence soon raised these drowsy heads. She served

out the rich black fluid, without sugar, in beer glasses; and very eager was the scramble with which each successive glass was fought for and secured. Bread there was none to be had, though Waldeck's entreaties might have drawn tears from the eyes of the Sphinx; and so it was with this breakfast that we set out, at four o'clock, through heavy rain, for Königgrätz.

III

THE FIELD OF SADOWA

Out of the neighbourhood of the Iser and Riezen Gebirge there is not in Bohemia a more lonely and desolate-looking district than the country lying between Hörzitz and the battle-field of Königgrätz. The small clusters of houses seem to be miserably poor; the peasantry are ill-clad; there is no brisk sound of coach or carriage along the dull and unfrequented roads. One can scarcely imagine what must have been the terror and awe of one of these men who have lived year after year the same monotonous existence in the same monotonous place, when the oppressive silence which usually broods over these wearisome

plains and hills was suddenly broken by the roar and tumult and confusion of the passing of 440,000 men; and still further when, instead of the quiet rustle of leaves and the still lapping of the small river, there came the crackling of innumerable rifles and the long boom of the bigger guns. It is little wonder that families dwelling in cottages miles distant from the scene of the battle were glad to flee from their homes; and that even yet these swarthy-faced, dark-eyed people have not amassed sufficient courage to return.

And if this district ordinarily looks so melancholy, what did it not appear on that morning when we left Hörzitz at four o'clock, with a thick mist of rain hanging over the distant trees, and falling like smoke upon the fields of corn; while the road was inches deep with yellow mud, the product of the long night's rain?

Unfortunately we undertook to leave this

road in the expectation that the country by-paths might be less cut up; Waldek having taken down at a Bohemian's dictation elaborate instructions by which we should arrive at Sadowa by way of Horzenowitz. We certainly found that these rugged stony lanes had not been ploughed by the wheels of artillery waggons; but instead of a level plain of mud we had now deep pools of water, which were only to be avoided by climbing up clayey banks and treading down some poor peasant's grain. Then the clouds became thicker and heavier; the incessant showers more drenching; until, about eight o'clock, our little party, wet "through and through," was forced to seek refuge in a cottage.

It was a poor little place, the home of a country weaver, whose two looms, two beds, cooking apparatus, and what not, were all in the one room which the

cottage contained. There were inside the weaver and his brother, the wife and mother-in-law of the former, and a little boy who lay asleep on a straw bed placed in the middle of the floor. No one of them could speak German; but through Waldek we were given to understand that they were glad to be able to afford us shelter, and that in a few minutes they would kindle a fire, in front of which we could dry ourselves. They seemed to take it very much amiss that Heinz and Vecko continued standing, until it was with some difficulty explained to them that as the nether garments of both of our travellers were dripping with the rain, their sitting down would only add to their discomfort. The heap of sticks having been lighted, we were invited to enjoy the vapour-bath which the fire offered; while the woman proceeded to prepare breakfast for her husband and his brother, though the only

food I could see in the place was twenty or thirty dried mushrooms carefully spread out on a board. Had bread been visible, we should gladly have besought them to sell us a loaf; but as there seemed no such prospect and no chance of the rain ceasing, we again set out.

Our subsequent journey was a wild scramble up and down these ruts that here serve for country roads, seeking by-paths through fields and by the side of streams, until it appeared to us that we had passed the extreme limit of the inhabited world, and come into the region of perpetual rain. There was not even a turnip which one could annex; the only thing we could get to eat was the fruit of some wild plum-trees, which was, of course, green and acrid to the last degree. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon, however, we came upon several rows of cherry-trees, which were planted along

the borders of some cornfields; and as the fruit was ruddy, if not ripe, we set about making a capital breakfast.

"What, then, do you want there?" cried a man, suddenly emerging from a sort of sentry-box we had not noticed.

"You," said Waldeck. "We want you to tell us where we can buy some riper cherries and some bread."

"Does everybody here live upon mushrooms, then?"

But with a little entreaty he directed us to the house, and here they were good enough to sell to us for twenty kreutzers a hatful of cherries and a half loaf of bread. These having been divided with a scrupulous care, we sat down upon the trunk of a fallen tree and finished our breakfast; then once more set out upon this seemingly endless quest through fields, and fields, and again fields, while no trace of a village was to be seen in any direction.

Coming, however, to the top of a little hill, we saw in the plain beneath the long slopes of corn evenly trodden down, while at regular intervals were the baked beds of clay whereon the camp fires had been kindled. Knowing that by following this trampled track we should certainly reach the field of Sadowa, we did so for a certain space; and found that it led us once more to the main road, and almost directly in front of the village itself. There, behind the chestnuts and the tall poplars, were the charred walls of the houses; down in the river a few ducks were paddling about in the water as if there were no Prussian soldiers near; here, not two yards from the main road, and underneath the chestnuts, was a long, large grave of red clay, with the usual wooden cross above it, and around were a few villagers who seemed to have nothing now to do but stand and watch the

waggons that passed carrying wounded men. By the roadside, in front of the grave, two hawkers had displayed upon their barrow an array of cigars, loaves, and two kinds of cognac. The cigars were five a penny, the loaves a half-penny each, the cognac a penny farthing a glass. Presently there came clattering along a procession of Prussian artillerymen, in charge of twenty-three Austrian cannon; and as each man came forward he reined up his horse, and throwing back his great blue cloak drank off a glass of this horrible mixture of bad brandy, brown sugar, and water. Then he generally purchased two cigars, and rode joyfully off in the rain to overtake his companions. The destitution of Sadowa was rapidly making the fortune of these two speculators; for the villagers themselves came out and bought a loaf, which they stood by the wayside to eat. The mixture sold as cognac must have been

of home manufacture; and had General Benedek, who, they say, after the battle rode about trying to get killed, drank half a bottle of this fluid he might easily have accomplished his wish.

We crossed the small stone bridge over the Bistricz, and ascended the hill on the other side, the patrols allowing us to pass without a question. Here we were joined by a party of men and boys who, for a considerable time, kept watching us in a curiously suspicious way. It subsequently appeared that these peasants had come from their remote homes in order to get some of the spoil of the recent battle; and that they suspected we were there on a similar errand. Were the two small armies, then, to be mutually destructive? or was the clan Phairson to exterminate the clan McTavish, and annex all the booty? As we made our way through the long forest of birches and firs which many a Prussian

soldier will remember, these men followed us, as though we possessed the keener scent for booty; and as they saw us stumble over knapsacks, and helmets, and what not, without pocketing anything, they began to be very friendly, and in the intervals of their labour—which consisted in wrenching off the metal of any article that happened to be lying in their way—they occasionally offered us this or the other curiosity. I could not help admiring the extraordinary dexterity which one old man evinced in unbuckling the inner flaps of the knapsacks, throwing the whole open, and at once pitching the thing aside if there was nothing to be found. While his companions were examining with a vague wonder the bottles, or percussion-pouches, or belts which lay around, this old man—surely he must have been descended from a Highland chieftain—went from knapsack to knapsack with

those keen, penetrating eyes, unfolding the leather pockets as though he had the nimble fingers of a milliner, and appropriating whatever he considered valuable. Thus a great many cartridge-pouches were still full; but, the grooved bullets being of little use to him, he broke the cartridges in two halves, and put the powder end only into his wallet. Once, however, he was cruelly imposed upon. I happened to kick with my foot a percussion-box which was full, and, hearing the rattle, he at once jumped to the place, doubtless expecting to find a Prussian officer's purse crammed with silver thalers. When he picked up the box and saw the contents, he pretended not to be disgusted, and examined the copper caps with much attention.

As we emerged from the wood we encountered a strong south-westerly wind, laden with the horrible stench of the dead

bodies. At first it was possible to avoid this evil odour by keeping to windward of thirty or forty dead horses which were lying in a neighbouring ditch; but afterwards there came from all points of the compass the same frightful message. The old hero—he must have been descended from a Highland freebooter—paid not the slightest attention; for now the long flat cornfields were thickly strewn with scabbards, and battered helmets, and so forth—a perfect harvest of plunder. Here were no longer such articles as the soldiers had thrown away; here were what had been stripped from the dead, or what had fallen from the hands of the dying. So it was that the other men began to use their sticks, having a sort of superstitious fear of the blood with which most of these innumerable relics were dyed; but the old man was not so dainty. It did not matter to him

though his fingers were stained purple as he unscrewed the brass eagle from the helmets, or cut the buckle off the white belts; and with a sort of wild luxury, as though he was about to swim in this sea of riches, he dragged a large number of things together, and then went down on his knees to pick and choose what best suited his fancy.

Kleptomania is infectious. Presently we saw Heinz touching delicately one after another helmet, and when he had obtained one with no ugly stains inside, he proceeded to unscrew the scowling bird in brass which adorned the head-piece. Then we arrived at an upset artillery waggon, beside which lay a large number of 12-pound grenades, filled with powder.

Vecko looked wistfully at this display; there were certainly not less than £300 worth of ammunition lying there.

"If one could only carry home such a

weight!" he sighed, regarding one of the grenades.

"If we could only pass the patrols!" said Heinz, plaintively.

"We may get a seat in a returning waggon," said Waldek.

"Do you want to blow us up in the air?" said Rosenfeld, angrily.

Vecko went down into the ditch, took up one of the heavy grenades, and pulled it out of its case.

"It would be an interesting relic," said he, "if one could only get the powder out."

"Hist!" cried Rosenfeld, "here comes a Prussian."

The grenade was dropped on the ground; and with an innocent look the prospective thief turned to regard the soldier who had "required" a man, horse, and cart, all of which he was directing as best he could.

"Do any of you gentlemen speak Bohemian?" he asked.

Vecko, with much unnecessary profuseness of courtesy, said he did.

"Will you, then, tell this man that he must take this waggon straight over the hill there, underneath the wood?"

The poor peasant received his instructions, and scarcely had they departed when both Heinz and Vecko began to conceal one of these large grenades underneath their coat. Then we passed on to where they were burying the dead.

The first man we saw had his foot on the thigh of a dead Austrian soldier, and with both hands was trying to pull off the blue and braided trousers, preparatory to the corpse being pitched into the hole which three other men were digging. A number of bodies lay around also waiting to be stripped; and some one had put a knapsack over the wounds, which were too

horrible to be looked upon. I do not know why they were so anxious to tear the clothes off the bodies, unless it was through some superstitious fear of rifling a dead man's pockets so long as the corpse was in the garments.

The peasants who were with us took off their caps as they passed this group; except the old man, who merely lifted a leathern pouch, and asked the grave-diggers if he might have it. Further on was a similar cluster of dead bodies, carelessly flung together; and further still half a dozen men were engaged in the work of shovelling earth over a long line of dead horses that were lying on their backs.

"The soldiers have carried away all the rifles and swords," said the old man.

As we reached the top of the hill which lies south of the village of Horzenowicz, we had now an extended view of the battle-field on every hand—stretching away over

these long plains of trampled corn into the dull blue lines of the horizon. Indistinctly we could perceive the white circles of water surrounding the fortress of Königgrätz, and the dark traces of the great walls; for we were now beyond Sadowa, and on the track of the retreating Austrians. Far as one could see there was no human being visible on these wide plains; only bar after bar of faint grey, or yellow, or green, with a few rows of trees, and overhead a weary stretch of leaden sky. On the road beside us, however, the Prussian patrols still rode up and down, eyeing us curiously, and almost causing Vecko and Heinz to drop the grooved and conical lump of lead they still endeavoured to keep beneath their coat. It was a blank, cheerless prospect; especially as we knew that further progress was impossible, and that instead of pressing on to overtake the army of which we were in search, we must return along these liquid

roads and under the lowering sky, to Turnau.

A large rudely built waggon came along, dragged by two horses.

"We will each give you a florin if you take us to Gitschin," said Heinz to the driver, as he cast a despairing look upon our weather prospects.

"Who are you?"

"Reichenbergers all."

"Have you passes from the commandant?"

"Yes."

"And you won't get me into trouble at the outposts?"

"Certainly not."

"Come in, then, and God bless you!"

Towards evening we reached Gitschin, and the next morning set out for Turnau. There was now added to our party a young Bohemian girl, with rosy cheeks and black hair, who seemed unable to look at anybody

without simpering, and smiling bashfully, and looking down. Now, on the road to Turnau the slow lumbering waggon passed, I should think, about eight hundred mounted soldiers; and not one of these men, who were in charge of provision carts, passed our rustic vehicle without paying some vocal or pantomimic compliment to the beauty who sat throned on an empty beer-barrel, supported on the one side by Vocko, on the other by Rosenfeld. She had never been the object of so much attention, and she giggled and laughed and pretended to be frightened in the most interesting way as each successive soldier sought a new method of testifying his deep regard for her. One would turn away his head and sob as he left her; another would spur his horse until the animal's head had almost knocked the princess off her throne; a third in dumb show represented the delight with which he was anxious to place

her on the horse beside him. The priest of Libun was not a little astonished to see us return in this fashion; and probably thought that our triumphal procession was but in anticipation of the carnival of Cologne.

So it was that we entered the market-place of Turnau, much to the wonderment of the simple people who were there assembled; we scrambled out of the waggon in which we had been cramped up so long, and paid our florins to the worthy driver; the princess with the bare head and the rosy cheeks descended from her beer-barrel and departed, and we saw her no more.

IV

KÖNIGGRÄTZ

THANK you: the doctor says no window must remain open after five o'clock.

And you want to know what I saw of the battle of Königgrätz? Not much, in truth, though I was on the field all that day, and all the next day, and a bit of the following night. You see, a corporal isn't allowed to stand two miles off with a field-glass in his hand, and look down on the battle like Napoleon in the pictures of Waterloo. What I saw of the fight was something very different; and I shall tell you.

You have seen Sadowa? Well, you

know the broad and muddy road that, coming from Hörzitz, sweeps round a sort of hill about half a mile on this side of the village; and perhaps you know that over the hill goes another path for foot passengers which has a row of young lime trees on each side. Our regiment was posted on the brow of this little hill; and all around, as far as you could see on every hand, were crowds of our soldiers —busy getting wood for the camp fires, building up the big clay ovens for the cooking, and bringing branches from the birch-wood opposite for the officers' tents. We were stationed on this hill, as I said, and a worse spot for an encampment I have never seen. We were pretty well accustomed to rain by this time (I believe there has not been a gleam of sunshine in Bohemia since Noah's rainbow twinkled over it); but, instead of the rain running down the hill, as you would naturally

expect, it gathered in pools beneath the trampled corn, and you could not see it until you had walked through it. During the night before the battle the rain fell only slightly and at intervals; but somehow everything seemed wet and cold—the fires could scarcely be kept alight from the dampness of the wood; our cloaks, instead of keeping us warm, only kept us wet; and the wind that blew across the fields seemed as if it had come direct from the North Pole.

Yes, the cigars here are very bad; but you must ask the doctor if I can smoke another before supper.

Need you wonder that I slept little? I looked with envy on my comrades, most of whom were fast asleep in spite of the cold, and in spite of the knowledge that at any moment we might be called into line and marched off against the Austrians, whom we knew were almost within cannon

distance. I sat and watched the flickering of our camp fires away along these slopes; and I wondered how many of our 250,000 men were in like manner looking on the twinkling bits of orange and red that seemed to be continued for miles.

Early in the morning we saw that part of our army was already moving; and as the great squares of dark blue silently covered field after field and disappeared farther to the east, we could only guess that they were about to engage the Austrians. About six o'clock we were also ordered to advance. I do not think there was a word said as we left the ground on which we had encamped; perhaps every one was thinking, as I was thinking, of the people I had left at home. The noise and confusion around me seemed to be shut out as if my ears were stuffed with cotton; and somehow it appeared to me that there were faces looking at me which

were certainly not the faces of my comrades. Perhaps I am more of a coward than others are—one can't help being what Nature has made him—but I wondered then if I should ever return to Aachen, and carry with me the recollection of having seen that dull and dreary picture of wet plains, and gloomy woods, and long grey belts of mist. Even now I can remember the aspect of individual trees; and when I shut my eyes I can see every field, every ditch, and every line of pale yellow or grey. I looked at my comrades; they said nothing, but I thought they were quite careless and contented. You see, you can't tell of what a man is thinking by the colour of his eyes or the profusion of his beard; and at that time I envied my neighbours the apparent equanimity with which they marched forward, and wished that I, too, had had the same indifference. It may

be that I wronged them, and that they also were thinking of their friends in the north.

I have a watch—an English watch, too—but I left it at home when our regiment came away; and so I can't tell you when we first heard the sound of the firing. It was very dull at first—just as if one allowed his rifle to fall upon grass—and for a considerable time it was kept up with a sort of soft regularity which made one feel as if it was not very dangerous. Besides, we knew that it was very distant; and as our battalions were again ordered to halt, we began to wonder whether we should ever enter the battle at all. The firing had produced a little excitement among us; and as we stopped near the foot of this hill, the men in the ranks began to speak more freely about the chances of the fight. After some time we heard that the nearest troops of

the Austrians had altered their position, and many said that they were already retreating. When this rumour got abroad there was much discontentment amongst the men that they should be kept back here; and one of us asked our second-lieutenant if we were not even to see the battle.

"The battle is not over," said he.

"The Austrians are going away," said the man who had ventured to ask the question.

The young fellow only smiled, and said, "Not yet." He was about the first man among us whom I subsequently saw shot down.

Yes, if you would put the pillow a little higher I should be obliged to you. What! — tire myself speaking? Why, to get somebody to speak to is about as good as a good cigar!

The wind was bitterly cold. It came

whistling over these blank fields, and made one shiver as though it was December. Then all over the sky was a dull grey; and along the south-east were heavy masses of dark cloud, which every now and again melted into a soft mist and hid from us the distant lines of fields and woods along the horizon. The farther we advanced the farther off seemed to be the Austrians; everywhere, as we passed down into the hollow and marched up the opposite incline, we saw only the dark squares of our own troops. It was not until we passed a long forest of young birches that we first saw the Austrians. That was a strange sight! There seemed to be no fields over yonder —only miles of grey uniforms rising and falling like waves until they were hid in the blue mist. We saw that these grey undulations were in movement; we could not tell whether they were advancing or

retreating; but we were very sure that the battle was not yet over, for every moment the firing seemed to come nearer and nearer, and now an occasional grenade fell in the neighbouring wood and burst with a terrific noise. We were ordered to march round the extremity of the wood, over some fields of potatoes; and here the grenades began to fall more rapidly and in our immediate neighbourhood. The first man struck was the young lieutenant of whom I told you. I did not see the shell, or even notice that it had exploded near us; but suddenly the young officer uttered a cry, his sword fell out of his hand, and he tumbled back on the field. The very next instant a grenade buried itself in the earth not twenty yards from us. I shut my eyes; immediately there was a loud explosion; and, that over, I looked round and saw no one hurt—only our first-lieutenant's horse was shot

through the head with one of the splinters.

I can't say what my comrades then thought; but I think I should gladly have given everything I possess for the chance of rushing forward into the thick of the battle. It was terrible to await there, in cold blood, the falling of these shells, every one of which now struck down one or two men or horses—better to have rushed against a wall of bayonets, such as we saw glittering in front of the grey squares of the Austrians. Fortunately at this moment we were ordered to advance—we marched more rapidly—for now every step revealed to us more and more Austrians lying down there in the hollow in front of us. You know, we are not allowed to fire our needle guns until we are very near the enemy; but I think the greatest luxury I could then have enjoyed was to be allowed to throw away

my cartridge-pouch and to charge upon the Austrian lines of blue and grey with the bayonet. More and more rapidly we advanced—now no one spoke, but the silence was not the silence of fear. I felt my eyes grow red, and instead of a grey sky and grey fields I only saw an atmosphere of dull orange—and every shell that exploded near us only made us long the more to get at these lines, behind which the artillery were posted. Suddenly—as if we had been cut in the face with a sword—we were ordered to change our front; and the next moment I saw what even now seems to oppress my eyes.

Yes, you may reach me the water; but don't put too much wine in it.

It appeared to me, then, that directly out of the gloomy grey sky there came an immense black wall; and that this mass of darkness grew momentarily larger

and larger, until it seemed about to break upon us and overwhelm us. The next moment there was a flashing of long white sabres, a noise as of thunder, and then—nothing.

You think it impossible that a squadron of cavalry could ride over you without killing you? At all events, I am not dead yet; and hope once more to see Aschen.

When I awoke, as if from a long sleep, I found that I could not breathe. I gasped and struggled—but there was a heavy weight on my chest that I thought would kill me. I was lying on my back; and, as I opened my eyes I saw between me and the grey clouds a bank of red earth, over the summit of which drooped some wet corn. It was evident, then, that I was lying in a ditch; but what was this weight that threatened to choke me? I lifted my left arm and put it on my

breast—here I felt something that was at first very strange to the touch, but which I presently knew to be the leg and hoof of a horse. It only required, then, that I should remove the weight in order to free myself; and to accomplish this I lifted my right arm. May you never experience the pang that shot through my whole body then! It seemed to burn me up; then there came a drowsy sleep, and again everything went away from my eyes.

It was raining when I came to myself again—a soft, slow, silent rain that fell on my eyelids and my chest until I was numbed with the intense cold. Once more I tried to lift the horse's foot, and once more that shiver of keen pain ran through me. The more I tried to shove it from me, the more it seemed to weigh upon me; and at last I resolved to await the coming of some passers-by. I could

not lift my head to see in what part of the field I was; beside me there was only visible the red bank of earth, a cartridge-box, and a bayonet, which I fancied was mine, and which was stained with blood.

No one came. I could indistinctly hear the noise of wheels; but whether these were of the waggons carrying the wounded, or of the provision carts on the main road, I was unable to determine.

You read in novels of days being years, and so forth; and these are pretty phrases to describe the anguish of a stupid girl on discovering that her mother is wiser than herself; but then I had no idea of days, or years, or ages. I seemed to be surrounded only by grey mist, and to know only one thing—that the weight upon my chest was about to kill me. I did not know whether this was the day of the battle, or a day after the battle,

or a week after; I only knew that all the life in my body seemed to be concentrated in my chest, and that there it was being slowly taken away from me. The grey blank above my head grew darker and more dark, until I could with difficulty trace the lines of the trodden straw that hung over the edge of the ditch; and then a slow rain again began to descend.

I think I hear the doctor in the passage; would you be so good as to ask him now if I may smoke. . . . Ah, so ? Then pray light the cigar for me; I can't raise my right arm.

It must have been late in the night when I looked up and saw two or three dark figures pass along the edge of the bank. At first I fancied I only dreamed they were there, so accustomed had I grown to look up and see nothing but clouds. Nevertheless, I tried to cry out; and then I saw them pause.

"Here is another down here," said one of the men.

"Not at all," said his neighbour; "we have looked the whole length of this ditch down from the wood."

I endeavoured to cry once more—I found that the effort very nearly choked me. I had quite expected to see the men walk off, when the first speaker jumped down from the bank.

He jumped upon the dead horse; and this shock, as communicated to me, seemed to take away my last chance of life. When he came to me I could only groan; and I have a vague remembrance of the three men struggling to drag the leg of the horse from my breast. Then I was lifted up and laid on the field; and one of the soldiers took off his cloak and spread it over me, while the other two went away for a stretcher.

But the pain of being lifted from the

ditch made me wish to be dead before they returned, so as to escape a repetition of the torture. I scarcely know how I was placed in the canvas when it was brought; I remember only being carried into a poor little room, in which there were about twenty men lying on couches on the floor.

There were two candles burning on a side-table, and in the dim orange light I could see the eyes of the white and brown faces lying there turned to see who was the new comer. An old woman and a girl were present, busily helping the doctor to tie up bandages and so forth; and as soon as I was carried in they made a little room for me, and placed another couch on the floor. The doctor came and looked into my face.

"Where are you wounded?" he said.

I could not speak then; perhaps it was

the warmth of the room that made a sort of drowsiness float through my head.

"Here, in the shoulder," said one of the men, and I shivered lest he should touch that spot.

"He must have fallen into the river," said the doctor.

"No," said the man who had at first spoken; "we found him in one of the ditches."

"There are plenty more there," said the man; "but it will be light in an hour or two."

So they placed me on the couch—how very gentle they were to me!—and then they began to rip up the sleeve of my coat, so that the doctor might get at my shoulder.

I was very grateful to them; but I wished they would only let me alone, and let me die. I envied the other men who were wounded, and who were past the

stage of having their wounds dressed; it seemed to me then that all these men were being allowed to die in peace, while I only was being subjected to the most horrible torture. All that night I lay and heard them groaning in their agony; and I thought to myself that I, at least, should cheat the doctor and be dead before he came in the morning. But after the second day the fire in the wound lessened; and so long as I did not move I suffered very little pain. Yesterday they brought me here, along with six others, in a covered waggon; and you see what a nice, airy room we have got. I hear, too, that the Berlin people are going to send us better wine instead of that sweet stuff we get here; but I hope they will first send down to the houses near Königgrätz. We here can well afford to want it until they are supplied.

You will come again in the morning? Then, perhaps, you will write a letter for me to the people at home, to say that I am not dead yet.

A CONVERSATION WITH CARLYLE

A CONVERSATION WITH CARLYLE

I

In a somewhat shabbily furnished room (but on the walls there was a large copy of the Berlin picture of Frederick the Great dressed as a drummer-boy; and on the table a number of Frederick's snuff-boxes were strewn about) in a dingy little street in Chelsea, an old man, worn, and tired, and bent, with deeply lined, ascetic features, a firm under-jaw, tufted grey hair and tufted grey and white beard, and sunken and unutterably sorrowful eyes, returned from the fireplace, where with trembling fingers he had been lighting his long clay pipe, and

resumed his seat in front of the reading-desk.

"I do not think," he was saying, in an absent kind of way, "that I shall see Scotland again. To me it has become a sad and strange and solemn country; now that all my kinsfolk and friends are gone. And then there is the fatigue of the long journey; and the noise and the sleeplessness make travelling almost impossible for me. As it is, I suffer a great deal of physical misery, and also of mental gloom."

But presently he had resumed in a lighter strain—

"I well remember my first voyage to Glasgow. I was early up on deck; and I found that all around me was no atmosphere, nothing that could be called an atmosphere, but just a vast immensity of smoke and yellow vapour; and through the yellow vapour there pulsated an extra-

ordinary light—a red glare that flashed up and across the skies, as if the whole world were in conflagration. I turned, and asked the man at the wheel what it meant. 'Dixon's Ironworks,' said he. This Dixon family were of enormous wealth, according to popular repute; and yet there was a wild story of one of them, supposed to be worth nine millions, being suddenly confronted with the question whether he was worth nine pence—a story that gave rise to much talk and foolish wonder at the time. Doubtless he has long ere now gone down to Erebus and Nox. . . . The Glasgow merchants seemed to me a shrewd, well-to-do, plain, kindly, and hospitable folk; but their wives—I cannot recollect having ever taken notice of women's dress before—but I thought when I saw them in the streets that their gowns were just a little extravagant—a little marked and extravagant. . . . Glasgow is the 'west

country' to the Edinburgh people; and I got to know something of the west-country, chiefly through the long excursions that Edward Irving and I used to make through the Trossachs, and round by Loch Katrine, and Wordsworth's Inversnaid. Well I mind those walks; almost the individual trees down by the side of the water, the brown burns, the blue hills over Loch Lomond way. We had much to talk of in those days."

The pipe is laid aside; an afternoon stroll is proposed; and the old man suggests that the window should be opened, to let in the fresh air and let out the tobacco-smoke. His visitor would fain perform this little office for him; but no. With a gentle, old-fashioned courtesy one seldom encounters nowadays, the offer is declined; though the trembling hands find difficulty with the sash. But eventually the window is raised. Then he goes off to exchange

his grey woollen dressing-gown for the cloak and slouched hat familiar to Chelsea thoroughfares; and in a few minutes the house in Cheyne Row is left behind.

II

Now, in endeavouring to place on paper a few of Carlyle's *obiter dicta*, it is impossible to convey to the reader how immeasurably they lose in the process. Carlyle did not talk Scotch—not any dialect of it;* but he spoke with a strong South-of-Scotland insistence of emphasis; then he had a fine abundance of picturesque phraseology; and, above all, he liked to

* I have frequently seen put into Carlyle's mouth, as his native dialect, that strange and fearsome speech that for centuries has done duty among English humorists as the Scotch language. Shakespeare was an early offender. His Captain Jamy says: "It sall be vary gud, gud feith, gud captains bath; and I sall quit you with gud leve," etc. It is needless to observe that gibberish of this kind bears no relation whatsoever to any speech spoken anywhere outside the Zoological Gardens; but it—and the various emendations of it that have been handed down, and are now extant—may serve: gud feith, as a specimen of southern wit.

wind up a sentence with something—a wild exaggeration, it might be, or a sardonic paradox, or a scornful taunt—but, anyhow, with something that sounded like the crack of a whip.* It was rather startling to be asked, as a preliminary inquiry as to what was afoot in the literary world—

"Is that young man —— still going about vomiting forth blasphemy and the fires of Tophet?"

One was happy to be able to assure him that the young man —— was not doing anything of the kind; that, on the contrary, he was fast winning his way to a proud and

* It is amusing to notice how the chief of Carlyle's disciples —Ruskin, Froude, Kingsley, to name no others—have been now and again led away by the temptation of this trick of reckless climax. I have before me, as I write, a letter from Mr. Froude, in which he says that Victor Hugo is not worth notice, "except as illustrative of the tendencies of modern productiveness;" and he goes on: "The soil and atmosphere are unfavourable to high genius; and gifted men, for the most part, remain silent, or else go mad." Now, what does this mean? It means nothing at all. It is merely the crack of a whip, lashing the harmless and unresisting air.

honoured position in the very front rank of English poets.

But it was different when he came to talk of Tennyson; for he had somehow formed the impression that Tennyson was being ousted from his throne by the younger men; and this appeared greatly to concern him. It was a difficult matter to convince him that the "banjo Byrons" had not displaced Tennyson from the affections of the English people; and then, of course, the irrefragable argument—an appeal to Tennyson's publishers—could not be mentioned; for in these days, to say of a man that his books are bought by the public, is to convict him (at least the whipper-snappers of criticism appear to think so) of having sinned the unforgivable sin. How this delusion about Tennyson's waning popularity got implanted in Carlyle's mind, it is hard to say; but I venture to make a guess. It is well known—though it sounds

incredible enough — that Tennyson was sensitive to newspaper comment—he who ought never to have looked at a line of it; and it is just possible that he may have made complaint to Carlyle of the treatment he was receiving at the hands of some of the obscurities of the press. But that was not the treatment liberally and generously accorded him by the public — the great public of the English-speaking peoples; which, after all, to an English author, is the sole important thing.

About certain novelists: "There's that woman they call Miss ——, and there's that other woman who calls herself ——; God forbid that I should read their trash; but if what I am told of it be true, then when they go before Rhadamanthus, I should think their sentence would be forty stripes save one."

About Disraeli: "There's that man Disraeli. They tell me he is a good speaker.

Perhaps I do not know what a good speaker is. But I read a speech of his that he delivered at Glasgow a year or two ago; and it appeared to me the greatest jargon of nonsense that ever got into any poor creature's head!"

Nevertheless, he was not always grumbling and growling.

"This Chelsea Embankment now is about the cheerfullest place I know of: the brightness and general liveliness of it; the river flowing and shining; those small eager steamers puffing on their way, and carrying their loads; the open sky; the trees; the people walking up and down, to breathe the fresh air; the nursemaids and the perambulators and the children—the young generation coming on; even those brats o' laddies——"

But at this point one of the brats o' laddies got a swift surprise. He had been twirling himself round the iron rail

overlooking the Thames; and threatening every moment to pitch himself into the stream; when, of a sudden, he was gripped by the scruff of the neck, and hauled on to the pavement.

"You young rascal, do ye want to throw yourself into the water?"

That tatterdemalion, if he is alive, must now be a man of five-and-twenty: one wonders where he is, and whether he knows that in his youth he got a friendly word (and grip) from the greatest man of letters of the nineteenth century.

III

He appeared to be greatly interested in the Chelsea Pensioners, and in the various gardening occupations and amusements with which the ancient warriors managed to pass the time.

"There are two of them—I do not see them at the moment—who serve as an excellent example of the economy of human force. One of them is a helpless cripple, and cannot get about by himself; the other has lost his eyesight, and cannot get about by himself; so the lame man places himself in a Bath chair, and directs it, while the blind man pushes behind; and together they have their small rambles, doing no harm to any living creature, and each of

them profiting by lending to the other what the other lacks. . . . We had fine men for soldiers in those days; look at their stature even now, old and shrunken as they are."

But here the talk wandered away into Germany, partly perhaps because Carlyle had been reading a very frivolous little book of mine, the characters in which are supposed to have espoused the side of Germany at a time when Germany was not popular in England. Carlyle's personal experiences of Germany, however, seemed to have been distinctly disappointing; and although he did not expressly say so, one somehow gathered that the chief reason was a conclusion he had formed that the Germans did not properly appreciate Goethe.

"The most notable man in literature for two hundred years. . . . The one man who has shown us what Christianity might be without the husks and cloaks that have been

heaped upon it. . . . But there is no real religion at the present day. And the man or the nation that has no religion will come to no thing."

It was a matter of keen regret to him that he had never seen Goethe face to face.

"Thackeray's recollection of Goethe was vague and inaccurate; Thackeray had a confused memory of Goethe's being a dark man."

And then, as the conversation wandered on to other German authors, and when one was challenged to say which of them one had the greatest affection for, there was nothing possible but an honest answer, though it was easily to be foreseen that it would prove the letting in of waters. And it did. It proved to be the letting in of many waters. For the next quarter of an hour poor Heine had a bad time of it—

"That slimy and greasy Jew—fit only to eat sausages made of toads."

Thunders and lightnings raged round the head of poor Heinrich, and struck out at all his race as well—"no real fun in the Jews — a cynical grin — no honest laughter."

But at last the dispensation of wrath came to an end.

"After all, let us remember that he wrote the 'Lorelei.' And there was good-humour in his satire of Börne."

This mention of the "Lorelei" in mitigation of punishment was somewhat remarkable. Mr. Allingham, an old friend and frequent companion of Carlyle's, assured me that he, Carlyle, had no sense whatever of the magic of lyrical poetry; while he had unmistakably a magnificent disdain for anything, whether in art or literature, that he could not personally appreciate. He had himself tried verse-making; conspicuously

he did not succeed; and ever thereafter he kept repeating, "If you have anything to say, say it: why sing it?" In like manner he tried novel writing; he failed; and ever thereafter he scoffed at fiction —fiction, which from the time of Homer to the time of Thackeray has been the one beautiful and resplendent feature of the mental world. The same anthropometric tendency is clearly traceable throughout his article on Scott. If Carlyle mistook the agonies of dyspepsia for a mysterious and imperious call urging a man to go out into rocky places and wrestle with the Mystery of Existence; Scott, on the other hand, having a perfectly happy digestion, found it no part of his duty to wander into dark regions and fight imaginary dragons anywhere: much good it would have done either the world or him!—none the less the *Westminster* article had to be written, the one man measuring

the other by himself; and if there was any hurt done, it was not done to Scott. However, with regard to the "Lorelei," it is quite possible that Carlyle was crediting Heine, not with the strange lyrical enchantment of these verses, but with merely having written a universally popular song; for he can have travelled but for a short time in Germany who has not heard German mothers and their daughters sing the "Lorelei" duet, when the "Luft ist kühl, und es dunkelt, und ruhig fliesset der Rhein."

IV

Thereafter the talk was of a more private and personal nature; for this man appeared to have the kindliest and humanest interest in the family relationships and circumstances of any one he might chance to be talking to, however unimportant; and more than that, he had frank words of sympathy and encouragement for literary aims and ambitions that must to him, at his age, have seemed trivial enough. "I wish you well," he said, in earnest tones, at the parting of our ways. One could not help lingering for a moment or two, regarding that solitary and pathetic figure as it passed away along the grey pavement. I saw him no more.

BALLADE OF SOLITUDE

BALLADE OF SOLITUDE*

THANK Heaven, in these despondent days,
I have at least one faithful friend,
Who meekly listens to my lays,
As o'er the darkened downs we wend.
Nay, naught of mine may him offend;
In sooth he is a courteous wight,
His constancy needs no amend—
My shadow on a moonlight night.

Too proud to give me perjured praise,
He hearkens as we onward tend,
And ne'er disputes a doubtful phrase,
Nor says he cannot comprehend.
Might God such critics always send!
He turns not to the left or right,
But patient follows to the end—
My shadow on a moonlight night.

* First published in *Longman's Magazine*, and afterwards included in the Canterbury volume of "Ballades and Rondeaus."

And if the public grant me bays,
  On him no jealousies descend;
But through the midnight woodland ways,
  He velvet-footed will attend;
  Or where the chalk-cliffs downward bend
To meet the sea all silver bright,
  There will he come, most reverend—
My shadow on a moonlight night.

ENVOY.

O wise companion, I commend
  Your grace in being silent quite;
And envy with approval blend—
  My shadow on a moonlight night.

THE END

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